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This 'Portrait of a Young Woman' in black and red chalk, pen and brown ink, by Jacob Jordaens, was formerly ascribed to Rubens. The sitter has yet to be identified. The drawing which was probably executed c. 1635-1640 is included in the recently published volume of drawings in The Porpora Morgan Library. (See page 744 for details).

'Shakespeare and Tragedy'

An African in Greenland

The ambiguous life of W. H. Auden

Josephine Baker: from St Louis to St Denis

Dostoevsky and the Jews

The doodlebugs; the Letelier affair

Coups and continuities in Afghanistan

Glossolalia today

Commentary: Swift and Keats on television, Bergman's 'Marionettes', Achternbusch's 'Ella'

Poetry: James Fenton, Norman Nicholson

Fiction: Mary Gordon, Michael Moorcock

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appropriate words. Lear and Gloucester stumble in their discourse because they fail to understand what is going on; they are the subjects of a tragic action but, through incomprehension, do not rise to the occasion. I even find a trace, in Bayley's approach, though I may be mistaken, of sympathy with Johnson's theory that certain kinds of discourse or even expressions — "lun", "knife", "peep through the blanket" — are intrinsically unfit for tragedy.

These features of Lear are what make it an impossible play to act; it isn't at all that, as Lamb and others have supposed, it is too subtle for ordinary performance. All the same, Bayley thinks we can "simplify and vulgarise" in Lear himself, but these are qualities that lead the play away from tragedy, though the action itself ensures that this doesn't happen. Another feature of Lear that works against the coincidence of the matter of the play with the tragic form is that it is "Shakespeare's most realistically rural and domestic play". It is certainly a domestic play in that it is preoccupied with two family conflicts, though in this sense *Hamlet* and *Alcestis* are domestic plays too (and the Oedipus plays are domestic in the most intense way, so that the domesticity of the frame of action does not in itself constitute an element pulling against the tragic effect. But the rural aspect of Lear is a shaping and limiting factor in the play and does arguably, by introducing side-issues that are in themselves captivating, make against the high tragic effect.

The importance of this factor was noted by Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire*: "The world of King Lear... is a world of flowers, rough country, tempestuous winds, and wild, or farmyard, flocks; and, as a background there is continual mention of homely, comforted customs, legends, rhymes. This world is moored in nature, firmly as a Hardy novel." This is a part of Lear's realism. There is also, and Bayley makes nothing of this, an evident reflection of the character of the period. Although the play is, for many reasons, poetic as well as realistic, set in a mythic past, the realism of the rural scene makes it plain that this is the England of the time.

John F. Danby has brought out the kinship of the play's vision of society with Hobbes's vision of civil society as perpetually about to tumble into the cannibalistic anti-civilization of nature. There is the "new man", Edmund, the general picture of disorder in the State, a disorder which provokes — curse or salvation? — foreign intervention; and the grinding misery of life on the heath and in the castle, with the cold wind whistling through the hawthorn and turning the cockle on the steeples; and the bearded and whorled, the farmers and their savage dogs, the stocks, the darning in the corn, the nettled ditch, and, above all, the wandering herds of the dispossessed, the forsaken, the aimless and the mad. When Edgar decides to disguise himself, he knows what mess to adopt.

The country gives the proof and precedent (II.1.104) Bedlam beggars, who with railing voices stick in their numb and mortified here arms (II.1.105) Fine, wooden prickles, nalls, springs of misery; And with this horrible object, from low farms, Poor pelling villages, sheep-shears and mills, Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometimes with prayers, Enhance their charity.

There is even a suggestion of the life of the court, though it is mentioned only in Lear's disguised Edgar's reply in Lear's "What hast thou been?" "A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of my mistress's heart and did the act of darkness with her. Swore as many oaths as I spoke words and broke them in the sweet face of heaven... This seems a portrait of one who serves a courtier or, at least, of one who, sitting at the table of

a great noble, takes what he learns of Gloucester in their discourse as his model.

This is to propose a way of reading Lear that perhaps Bayley would not approve of. It assumes that historical knowledge fits us to read the play more effectively (not just more learnedly). I can see no stopping-place between looking up obsolete words and expressions in a work of reference — something that I take it, only a doctrinaire dolt would object to — and finding out about the Elizabethan Poor Law, Puritans and Recusants, and the balance between sheep-farming and arable.

Cordelia seems supremely important in the play but is the hardest of all the characters to elucidate. Bayley feels this. He thinks that Shakespeare did, as Tete and his contemporaries thought, go "too far" in contriving Cordelia's death at such a moment; and "he... produces no stylistic justification for doing so. That, to us, is the final effectiveness of his art here." Cordelia, he argues, stands outside all possible histrionic roles, as her sisters do not, acting out striking attitudes as what they are good at. "Her existence itself is absolute. It has no 'story' behind it; and it is conveyed by the blankness of her acceptance of marriage with France, as by the blankness of her rejection of her father's need that she should play a part with him." It is because she has no awareness of her character as belonging to tragedy, or even to the pathetic, that the death of Cordelia shocks us.

This strikes me as right so far as it goes. But I think the overblowing effect of Cordelia needs more scrutiny. Bayley notes the description of her weeping —

You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
Were like a better rain; those happy smiles
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.

(IV.1.17-22)
and rightly infers that one of the points here made is her self-consciousness, that is, her absence of vanity and self-regard, though it seems wrong to say, as Bayley does, that "there is a complete congruence between the Gentleman's eloquence and our sense of its object". Certainly Lear doesn't posture about her in this way — his question is "Be your tears wet?" (Compare this, with Lear's cry, on touching the supposed state of Hermione: "Oh she's warm; If this be magic let it be an art / Lawful as eating." (*The Winter's Tale*, V.1.136-138).)

The difference is there all right, but the way Bayley characterizes it seems unconsidered, or too much considered. Like many other critics Bayley doesn't comment on

Thou hast one daughter,
Who resembles nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

(IV.1.204-206)
The reference is obvious even to the modern reader it may be embarrassing. But it is certainly a part of the complex set of meanings that call to each other and answer within the play, and it deserves to be considered as a leading clue to one way into and out of the play. It also points forward, again, to *The Winter's Tale* (on this Stein's discussion in *Criticism as Dialogue* is very good), to the response of the King and Camillo to the revealing of the story of the Shepherd and the forsaken child.

... they seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes. There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed.

(V.1.13-17)
And later:
Thou might'st have beheld one
Joy crown'd another, so and in such
manner that it seemed sorrow wept
to take leave of them, for their joy
winded in tears. There was casting up
of eyes, holding up of hands, with

countenance of such distraction that they were to be known by garment, not by favour. Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his new-found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss-cry. "Oh, thy mother, thy mother!" then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then embraces his son-in-law; then again swears by his daughter with clasping her. Now he thinks the old shepherd, which stands by like a weather-beaten conduit of many kings' reigns.

(V.1.45-57)

It would be too easy to say that in *The Winter's Tale* the sting of Lear is drawn. That is not how tragedy works. But since I.A. Richards, whoever we may think of his reductive gloss, is certainly right in finding joy and repose within the experience Lear has the power to bestow, we may allow there is another way, that shown in the romances, and especially in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, of giving us a figure of that bliss in which Cordelia is — indeed, which she is — beyond any possibility of her being further savaged by the dark powers. Every statement of the redemptive power of the suffering of the innocent runs the risk of being glib and precured too cheaply; but to turn away from it, as though it didn't after all blaze out from the text, is the very syncope of criticism. Here are significant, here is a code to decipher, though once the code is deciphered the task of criticism has only begun.

The question I have raised is in part that of the nature of Shakespeare's spiritual development. The suggestion that in any sense his life was an allegory, as Keats thought, is out of favour. Two things have been suggested, as Kenneth Muir suggested in his preface to the 1970 reprint of *The Voyage to Italy*: "I would still accept Keats's remark that Shakespeare led a life of allegory, his works being the comments on it, even though I would not relate this spiritual biography to the actual events of his life." (One could make precisely this distinction in connection with Jane Austen's development, from the crackling brilliance of *Pride and Prejudice* to the autumnal grace of *Persuasion*.) Some things we might guess about the life in Lear, the foul vituperative passages about female sexuality have a trace of the compulsive — there really is an incongruity between the character Lear and the situation within which it is spoken; it is as though the writer is screaming his own pain. But we shall never know, and it doesn't matter. But that there is spiritual development from the comedies and histories to the central tragedies and then on to the romances, seems evident. Moral problems are given a second and a third look, the topics of political order, of allegiance, of cosmic and social hierarchy, are spun like patterns in a kaleidoscope. And there is the never-ceasing and deepening love for the countryside and its occupations, for cultivation, for creation, birth, death, the rearing of beasts, life in the forest and on the heath, the seasons, the look of the sky; and there is a strengthening of that serenity, the sense of the piercing beauty of the natural and public scene, that is like the vision of a patria from which we have — with what pain! — been excluded for a time.

King. This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends
itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting marlet, does
approve
By his loved mansion here, the
heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty,
buttress, nor coign of vantage, but
this bird
Hath made his pendant bed and
procrustean cradle.
Where they most breed and haunt, I
have observed.

(Macbeth I, 1-10)
Clemency. The climate's delicate, the air
most sweet.

William Empson, with characteristic generosity, wrote in *The Structure of Complex Words* (in his chapter on the Fool in Lear):

Going back to Bradley after drafting my piece, I was struck by how much I had unconsciously borrowed from him, how much broader and more adequate to the play his whole treatment seemed than mine, and what an enormous amount he gets said in his apparently brief and leisurely texts.

Going back to Bradley one finds in him demonstrations of Bradley's main position: that the peculiar flavour of Shakespeare's tragedy, at any rate outside the histories and the Roman plays, is caused by an incongruity between the consciousness of the protagonist, as expressed in what he is given to say, and his formal role in the play. For example, Bayley writes: "The point about Hamlet is not whether he is noble or neurotic, good or bad, but that he is unsuited to play in revenge tragedy". Again he writes that as we inspect the ebbs and flows, hidden secretions, articulations of joints, and even the analogue of self-consciousness in the literary form was that if human beings were capable of it."

Here is Bradley on *The Merchant of Venice*:

One reason why the end of the *Mercantile of Venice* fails to satisfy is that Shylock is a tragic character, and that we cannot believe in his accepting his defeat... This was a case where Shakespeare's imagination ran away with him, so that he drew a figure with which the destined pleasant ending would not harmonize.

Here is the concept of incongruity, though in this case it isn't that the

This drawing by Rembrandt in pen and brown ink, with yellow and red chalks of "Two Mimmers on Horseback", like the portrait on the cover by J. H. M. is taken from the scholarly and magnificently produced European Drawings 1375-1825 (291pp. The Pierpont Morgan Library/Oxford University Press, £35. 0 19 520258 9) which includes 125 of the best and most important drawings from the Pierpont Morgan Library. The cornerstone of the collection, one of the most renowned in the United States, comprises the drawings purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1910 from the English artist and dealer Charles Fairfax Murray.

Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing
The common praise it bears.
Dion. I shall report,
For most it taught me, the celestial habits
[Methinks] I so should turn them I and the
Of the grove waters. O, the sacrifice,
How ceremonious, solemn and unearthly
It was 't' offering!
Clemency. But of all, the burst
And the ear-deafening voice 't' his oracle,
Kin to Jove's thunder, so surprised my sense

That I was nothing.
(*The Winter's Tale*, III.1.15)

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character fails to suit the tragedy, which is Bayley's favourite incongruity, but that the character's being tragic fits to fit the requirements of comedy.

On Lear Bradley begins with his own bafflement before the evident fact, as he sees it, that Lear is Shakespeare's greatest achievement but is by no means his best play, even among the tragedies. He also finds tragedy deep in the verse of the tragedies after *Hamlet*, especially in *Lear* and *Timon*.

... it is sometimes involved and obscure, and from these and other causes deficient in charm. On the other hand, it is always full of life and movement, and in great passages produces sudden, strange, electrifying effects which are rarely found in earlier plays...

And in the lecture on Lear there is a good analysis of the conflict between the demands of the poetry and the demands of the theatrical form.

Morgan's essay on Falstaff is certainly an important piece of writing, though I can't clear that the key term "impression" will do all the work Bayley imposes upon it. But the concepts of character and assigned role, these are to be found in the classic commentators, in Wilson Knight as well as in Bradley. Such analyses, always inadequate to the material, are forced upon us by Shakespeare's works. These resemble natural organisms, as though they had internal reciprocal movements, ebbs and flows, hidden secretions, articulations of joints, and even the analogue of self-consciousness in the literary form was that if human beings were capable of it."

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HUMPHREY CARPENTER:

W. H. Auden: A Biography
495pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.50.
H 04 928044 9

One of the many quotations from other writers which Auden used to underpin works of his own — in this case affixed as epigraph to *New Year Letter* — comes from Montaigne: "We are, I know not how, double in ourselves, so that what we believe we disbelieve, and cannot rid ourselves of what we condemn." When I first read *New Year Letter* this seemed, like most of Auden's gatherings of other men's flowers, alert and relevant enough, but not an outstandingly pertinent insight. Now, after finishing Humphrey Carpenter's extraordinarily thorough exposition of Auden's life, I find it comes to mind with daunting force. On my pilgrimage through Mr Carpenter's book, everything about Auden has begun to seem double.

Carpenter, for example, distils a great sense of Auden's unhappiness, yet we know how much Auden hated wet-logs, how constantly he repeated his many liturgies of his own good fortune. His prodigious taste for work and his powerful self-discipline (I thought his Protestant Work-Ethic! Both practical and sympathetic) existed alongside both the ethos of his daily life and that helplessness commented on by Hannah Arendt ("... I still found it difficult to understand fully what made him so miserable, so unable to do anything about circumstances that made everyday life so unbearable for him..."). His leadership and dominance often subsided into dependence and disappointment, with rebuffs and rejections by those he had hulled for their own good — the dependence exemplified clearly by his relations with Chester Kallman and the disappointment by Benjamin Britten's later coolness towards him. The sincerity of his return to the Christian church could still permit him to be deviously cunning and fitfully snubish, and the ethics of his sexuality never precluded predilections: he loved Chester Kallman despite Kallman's many infidelities, yet he wrote one of the most unimaginative of rebukes to the fits of trade he made use of — "In the Hungry Thirties I used to sell their bodies for a square meal." In the Affluent Sixties they still did to meet Hire-Purchase Payments. The Leader and Saviour (Wyndham Lewis's "new guy who got into the landscape") became the minor Atlantic Goethe: the Englishman, an Americanized idealist in Westminster Abbey, the apostropher of the most poets of his century who could handle extended forms; the marvellous celebrator of orthodoxy of one of the most eccentric figures of the age.

Auden's doubleness is his triumph. He was, as Humphrey Carpenter gives us ample opportunity to witness, a fallible, indeed treacherous clerk, but he was also a creative genius who humanized inspiration. Looking around at the desolation produced by genius at its most egotistical (let me start with the names of Joyce, Yeats, Schöenberg, Pound, Heckett — and then stop before I lose my courage), one rejoices in Auden's Old Adam, in his recognition that seriousness is a contrast between the divine afflatus and the historically conditioned muck. There have been supreme artists in this century whose seriousness is so olympian that it is untroubled by history or swank — Stravinsky and Wallace Stevens for example. But Auden's double vision, if it prevented his achieving what Stravinsky and Stevens did and kept him out of the ranks of the Modernists, fitted him to be the last of our age; one might adapt a title of his and call this *The Age of Ambiguity*.

Even his famous request that his friends burn his letters, and his well-known views on the biographies of artists ("Gossip Columnists I can forgive for they make no pretence; not biographers who claim it's for scholarship's sake"), seem to have been wittingly double-edged. Minutes, memoirs and anecdotes have poured

forth, and two major biographies have appeared in the eight years since his death. Somehow one feels he must have expected this and half-welcomed the prospect. Charles Osborne's biography, published early last year, certainly follows the gossip columnist's precepts more closely than it does the scholar's, but is no less enjoyable for that. It is more gracefully written than Humphrey Carpenter's new book. But it was clearly compiled too quickly, and Osborne did not have access to much of the material, chiefly those unburned letters, which has been made available to Carpenter. Carpenter's book amounts almost to an official biography: it is very thorough and, while sympathetic to Auden, does not gloss over his many peculiarities and occasional nastinesses. One of the most commonly repeated complaints about Osborne's book was its apparent lack of any sense of Auden as a great poet. If this means that Osborne failed to locate the heart of Auden's life in his poetry, then it is probably a justified complaint, and one which Carpenter cannot be accused of. However, Carpenter's book is not a work of literary criticism either — why should a biography be such a thing? — and renders wishing to gain enlightenment about Auden's work should read through the now deepening thickets of academic criticism devoted to him, starting with the most sensible and practical study of all — John Fuller's *Reader's Guide*.

Humphrey Carpenter takes as his key and his justification Auden's own view that while the life of an artist will not help explain his art, his works may, on the other hand, throw light upon his life. Accordingly, his point of departure throughout the book is what Auden was writing at any one time. Or, at least, that is ostensibly the case; in practice, Carpenter, like any sensible biographer, uses whatever sources he can locate. There is strong evidence that his guide has been Edward Mendelson, Auden's chief literary executor, and he has also enjoyed the cooperation of many of Auden's close friends, who have allowed him to quote from letters and personal documents and have given him reminiscences and explanations of Auden's conduct. Because they have trusted Carpenter, Auden's friends have conveyed an unofficial imprimatur to his book, and he is able to quote from Auden's own written-in annotations of his poems, identifying some of the people behind the vignettes, tableaux, pronouns and masks of those often cryptic works.

The faces sometimes fit as you would expect, sometimes not. I greeted with a homely nod, not a shock of recognition, Carpenter's identification of the character of Rosetta in *The Age of Anxiety* with Auden's surprising heterosexual lover Rhode Jaffe. But I would never have thought that the villanelle "If I Could Tell You", with its refrain line "I will say nothing but I told you so", might refer to Kallman; nor that the character, birthday poem "Many Happy Returns", with its immortal warning to "so many in the USA" not to "be ashamed of any suffering as vulgar", was directed at Kallman and that the dedication of this poem to John Rettiger, sub-teen son of Auden's hosts at Ann Arbor, was a mask for a lecture to Chester as well as a thank-you for hospitality received. These are only the merest samples of the many identifications which Mr Carpenter makes in the course of his considerably extended parade of Auden's friends and acquaintances. He starts these initial annotations very early on, in Auden's English period, and keeps them going to the end.

An inordinate amount of Mr Carpenter's space is devoted to Auden's love-life: never prudently, never stupidly and never completely irrelevantly — but not without discounting the surrounding seriousness of his life and work either. Perhaps homosexuality is the misleading spirit here. Byron's lovers were legion, and many have been identified, and other poets who had only one or two lovers have forced their biographers to make the most of what was available. But the heterosexual hero has not been so subject to the biographer's sense that a name or a face made manifest is

nothing less than a mystery explained. Charles Osborne, in his account of Auden, was accused of gossiping. Humphrey Carpenter is likely to be applauded for honestly tracing those connections in Auden's life which emerged as silent slopes in his poetry. The truth seems more likely to be the moderate view that Carpenter has taken more trouble over his identifications than Osborne did and that he received more help from Auden's friends.

Humphrey Carpenter does not shrink from examining the once unmentionable subject — what Auden liked in bed. John Fuller has already discussed those actions Auden called



Auden reading *The Hobbit* in the 1940s — from the book reviewed here.

"plain sewing" and "Princeton First-Year". Carpenter tells us that Auden was an urp man: fellatio was his number. Kallman was "an anal passive". Further, we are informed that Auden liked men who were "well-lit", perhaps because he considered his own penis to be undervalued. None of this is shocking or untoward. But it tends to get solemnized in a biography and to be made to explain more than it should.

The basic trouble must lie with the art (or semi-art) of biography itself. A man of action — the Duke of Wellington or Barnum or even Giotto — can be described in terms of his undertakings, his associates and his opponents. A writer's bequest to posterity is his works, which always have an ambiguous relationship to his life. His life is likely to be unheroic, and its highpoints may well be concerned with sex. So the biography of a writer homes in on his lovers, since they are the paleface equivalents of the man of action's deeds. But there, away from all revelation, stand the works themselves — in Auden's case that beautiful gathering of poems which has given so much pleasure to people who have never heard the names of Gebriel Carri

or Orhan Fox or Hunger of Vienna. It is partly Auden's own fault that one finishes Humphrey Carpenter's book impatient at all the exposure judged necessary after the previous reticence. Humphrey Carpenter has not escaped, perhaps, the accusation which Auden levelled at biographers — he has used the life (sex life especially) as sauce to the real dish, the poems.

Yet Carpenter's book is also continuously interesting and sometimes highly illuminating. A measure of his success is that the better you know Auden's poetry the more interested you will be in the unfolding of his life as Carpenter presents it. He does justice to that series of conversations, reversals, convictions and contradictions which are the true course of Auden's intellectual development. He is also very good at explaining how many of Auden's pieces, not least the plays he wrote with Isherwood, are palimpsests, with bits taken over from all sorts of previous works. His outline of the plot of *The Enemies of a Bishop*, forerunner of *The Promys* and so of *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, makes it sound the purest piece of Joe Orton avant la lettre. He quotes from a letter Auden's phrase "synonymy and solatium", which is also among the aphorisms in the early Notebook owned by the British Museum. He describes in considerable detail the incomplete manuscript poem in *The Year of My Youth* which Auden subsequently plundered for many other works. The best known of which is "The Witnesses", adapted from a song by Titi and Titi, two farcical characters in the earlier extravaganza. These lines from *The Year of My Youth* are fragments of Rosetta's speeches in *The Age of Anxiety*:

From Puffin Conyers, place for peacocks,
Came General Gorse of the white moustache,
Beside him Betty his obedient wife,
Christopher their son with the shabby walking,
And Antonelli their Italian chauffeur.
A family in totum, rich in Rulls,
Their diving dangerously in a blue Danimer
Admiral Hoffman with his breakfast club
From Honeypot Hall, house of doves,
His wife faint, frequent in embraces,
And one-eyed Bert, his faithful A.B.

All this is more thoroughly and better done in *The Age of Anxiety*, but the tone is certainly a pre-echo. Carpenter also tells us that among student poems included in *The Bachelor*, magazine of The Downs School where Auden taught in the mid 1930s, is one which begins "Now the snow is falling fast/ Nurse's flowers will not last". The Downs's resident poet could spot a good thing when he saw it, and so we got Auden's "Autumn Song":

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurse's flowers will not last,
Nurses to their graves are gone,
But the prams go rolling on.

On the other hand, the fact that there

are passages in the choros from *The Dog Beneath the Skin* which were taken from Anthony Collett's *The Changing Face of Europe* does not lessen their value or impact. A notion which is decorative or discursive in prose may be central and poetic in a well-shaped verse:

Not only is the North Sea so shallow
that if St Paul's was planted anywhere
between the Orkney and English
coasts the golden cross would
shine above water... (Collett)

Calm in this moment the Dutch sea so shallow
That sink St Paul's would ever show its golden cross
And still the deep water that divides us
still from Norway. (Auden)

Throughout his life Auden was a snapper-up of both unconsidered and often-considered trifles. "It's later than you think," a whole climate of opinion — did Auden coin them or merely make them famous? It is his special genius, as it was for so many poets in the past and tends not to be among poets today, to use language proverbially. Carpenter is helpful in tracing or at least emphasizing the important cross-fertilization in Auden's work whereby passages conceived under one dispensation were transferred or imitated to another. Only prigs worry about this. It is, after all, well-known and seldom deplored in music: much of Beethoven's dramatic material was conceived in his early years and worked over thereafter, and Handel borrowed prodigiously from both himself and others. Isherwood's famous remark that many of Auden's early poems were made up of lines assembled from unsuccessful works is probably an exaggeration, but it testifies to an important truth about Auden's mind. Add to this the trope of Valéry's which Auden loved to quote — "A poem is never finished but only abandoned" — and you appreciate that this poetry was a whole landscape to him, always sitting into the not-yet-finished mosaic. Each was a feature, each turn of his enthusiasm and conviction another view of the whole of creation: the phrases, feelings and images and across the years and styles which apparently separate them from each other, I have never understood the orthodoxy which asserts that early Auden and late Auden are miles apart. It isn't just that abandoned lead mines, beam engines and overshot water-wheels are common both to suggest Auden and to the late less-than-enriched Auden, nor even that he has an abiding fondness for aphorisms and neologisms, but rather something much more haunting: all of his work exhibits a tune of voice, social, oracular, sadly reasonable, frightened of extravagance yet welcoming the harque to avoid hecoring plain-spokenness, a deeply civilized cry from the heart of an uncivilizable species. This is what makes Auden an Old Master rather than a Modern Master.

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£5.95

Allen Lane

Auden's life in the closer perfection of his art, but inevitably one notices oddities and spacy facts more than the overall plan. His early pages are especially more interesting since he quotes from poems which none of us can have seen before - this chilling verse, for instance:

Tommy did a mother tell him
I'll be with you
The half-brother of angels
And the other half of shit.

Yet the "queer-making" power of myth is not the whole story. Auden had great respect for his father from whom he believed he inherited his intellect. "Mother wouldn't like it" may have been one of his constant topics of disapproval, but I know from many reminiscences of his friends that he would rejoice in people who did what his fathers did and what they felt for them.

Much of the unpublished verse which Carpenter prints is either poor or merely characteristic, but there are some unexpected gems. Carpenter has from a poem called "California" (a village near Birmingham). It dates from Auden's fifteenth year:

The twinkling lamps stream up the hill
Past the barn and past the mill
Right at the top of the road one sees
A round mound like a Sifton cheese.
A man pulled walk along that track
Fetch the mow and bring it back
Or gather stars up in his hand
Like strawberries on English land.

Some of the lines edited out of *New Year Letter* are also thoroughly worth reading.

For moulting stupid Mr Chips
Owns several heavy battle-ships.
Ridiculous young Liebigstein
Has camps to put his audience in.
Cher mousetraps Puddingtime alone
In their mousetraps.

Le amour-propre et le pouvoir
And the plain vulgarian lie
Is held up in position by
Noble police and the ornate
Grandezza of the Russian State.

But whatever the interest of such discoveries, most readers will rightly feel that the centre of Carpenter's book is its account of Auden's relationship with Chester Kallman. This "marriage" was the most serious thing which ever happened to Auden, just as John Donne's marriage was in his life. Carpenter treats it with insight and

understanding, and if he shows how much suffering Kallman's unfaithfulness caused Auden, he doesn't underestimate the high price Kallman paid for living in tandem with Auden. Whatever Kallman's gifts might have amounted to, ordinarily, they didn't want to produce "any species of that Gucky Greekness which permits itself to be staged by combining the Modern Dance with the side-views of a Grecian Urn".

The tumult of love-betrayed scared Auden and is probably the reason for his reputation of the unconvincing litany of his good fortune and happiness in later years. As Carpenter asserts, his most successful relationship was probably with his art. This did not maintain itself at its previous high level towards the end, but nor was it something he felt tempted to turn his back on. It is true that Auden was very tired and despairing just before he died, but even here the loyal reader has two texts to choose from and may guess which is the more relevant. The first comes from "Talking to Myself":

Time, we both know, will decay You,
and already
I'm scared of our divorce: I've seen
since I was a child
Remember: when *Le Bon Dieu* says to
You *Leave him*,
please, please, for his sake and mine,
pay no attention
to my piteous *Don'ts*, but bugger off
quickly.

The second is from "Lullaby":
Now you fondle
your almost-flesh
with melted satisfaction,
imagining that you are
slim and all-sufficient
sing in the den of yourself,
And now and then
Sing, Big Baby, sing lullaby.

Auden was a double man right to the end, but there is nothing ambiguous about the love his readers feel for him.

Fifty years on . . .

In the leading article in the TLS of July 2 1931, Virginia Woolf wrote about the Brownings, and in particular about Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. The Waves was published that year, and Virginia Woolf concentrated her piece on the merits of the "novel-poem" over the prose novel:

"Aurora Leigh," the novel-poem, is not the masterpiece that it might have been. . . . Stimulating and boring, ungainly and eloquent, monstrous and exquisite, all by turns, it overflows with whistles and howls; but, nevertheless, it still commands our interest and inspires respect. For it becomes clear as we read that, whatever Mrs Browning's faults, she was one of those rare writers who risk themselves adventurously and disinterestedly in an imaginative life which is independent of their private lives and demands to be considered apart from personalities. Her "intention" survives much that is faulty in her practice. Abridged and simplified from Auden's argument in the fifth book, that theory runs something like this. The sole work of poets, she said, is to present their own age, not Chaucer's. More passion takes place in drawing-rooms than in battlefields, with Roland and his knights. "To flinch from modern verities, coat of armour, cut for to-day and the picturesque, is to fail to face the world." For living not presents and records real life, and the only life we can truly know is our own. But what form, she asks, can a poem of modern life take?

If Mrs Browning meant by a novel-poem a book in which character is closely and subtly revealed, the relations of many hearts laid bare, and a story unfurling unfolded, she failed completely. But if she meant rather to give us a sense of life in general, of people who are unmistakably Victorian, who bring with them the problems of their own time, all brightened, intensified, and compacted by the fire of poetry, she succeeded. Aurora Leigh, with her passionate

interest in social questions, her conflict as artist and woman, her longing for knowledge and freedom, is the true daughter of her age. . . . The broader aspects of what it felt like to be a Victorian are seized as surely as any stamped as vividly upon us as in any novel by Trollope or Mrs Gaskell.

And indeed if we compare the prose novel and the novel-poem the triumphs are by no means all to the credit of prose. As we rush through page after page of narrative in which a dozen scenes that the novelist would smooth out separately are pressed into one, in which pages of deliberate description are fused into a single line, we cannot help feeling that the poet has outpaced the prose writer. Her page is packed with fullness. Characters, too, if they are not shown in conflict but snipped off and summed up with something of the exaggeration of a caricaturist, have a heightened and symbolical significance which prose with its gradual approach cannot rival. The general aspects of things, markets, sunsets, scenes in church, owing to the compressions and elisions of poetry have a brilliance and a continuity which mock the prose writer and his slow accumulations of careful detail. For these reasons "Aurora Leigh" remains a book that still lives and breathes and has its being. . . . We laugh, we protest, we complain of . . . absurdities, but - and this, after all, is a great tribute to a writer - we read to the end. The best compliment that we can pay "Aurora Leigh" however, is that it makes us wonder why it has left no successors. Surely the street, the drawing-room, all promising subjects; modern life is worthy of the muse. But the rapid sketch which Elizabeth Barrett Browning flung off when she rushed into the drawing-room and met face to face the humanity of her age remains unfinished. The conservatism of the thirteenth of poets still leaves the chief spoils of modern life to the novelist. We have no novel-poem of the age of George Eliot.

Doing one's bit for China

By W. J. F. Jenner

YUAN-TSUNG CHEN:
The Dragon's Village

285pp. Women's Press. £3.50.
0 7143 3865 3

In the poorest parts of China peasant life is so harsh that it is very hard to write about it truthfully there. Apart from such considerations as the taboos imposed by authority, how can the horrors of extreme poverty be put into print without hurting the dignity of the victims and the pride of the nation? One of the best things about recent Chinese fiction has been that writers have at last been allowed to touch on rural hunger and backwardness; and although this sort of uncomfortable honesty is now under attack as treasonous, anti-socialist, anti-party and anti-Mao, it will be harder in future to pretend that the problems do not exist.

It took years of living in America to enable Yuan-tsung Chen to write her fictionalized account of the experiences of an eighteen-year-old girl from a rich Shanghai family when 1950 goes off in a surge of enthusiasm to do her bit for revolutionary change in a village in the remote province of Gansu. The shock of the encounter is not less for her than it would be for a girl from London or New York: though she shares a more or less common language with

the peasants, they live in a world much further removed from hers than the thousand miles or so that separates them on the map.

Writers in modern China have dealt mainly with the politics of the Communist-run land redistribution campaigns of the late 1940s and early 1950s, underplaying the human factors involved. Where Mrs Chen's book is most effective is in conveying the physical and mental impact on the young narrator of a village so poor that the main food is husk-filled gruel, and even the "feudal" landlords, the class enemies that the city people have been drafted in to fight against, scarcely seem rich. A centuries-wide gulf of incomprehension keeps peasants and city-bred cadres from really understanding each other. When the narrator starts putting the instructions in her political manuals into practice the results can be horrifying. Some of the landlords have been unspeakable tyrants in their time, and remain dangerous enemies to the new order. But the methods that she and other members of her work-team use against them are often clumsy, unjust or cruel, and lead in one case to the suicide of an innocent man and in another to the gang rape of a landlord's young daughter.

This is a book full of harsh reality, drawing on the author's own experience and those of others to create a number of vivid and moving

scenes of a world in which life is reduced to the basics; what is surprising is not how little but how much human dignity and warmth the peasants preserve in destitution. The best parts of *The Dragon's Village* are those in which Mrs Chen conveys her immediate reactions to the physical and emotional shocks of sharing their life, albeit temporarily and as an outsider. I would have been an even better book if it had been written as a more imaginative and more carefully structured novel, or else had stayed within the limits of autobiography, which would have required more searching self-examination on the narrator's part. Autobiography might also have allowed her to compare her 1950 experience with later spells of life in the countryside and to ask some questions about what land reform followed by collectivization actually did for Gansu peasants. As it is, the reader is ever quite sure when life is being improved for the sake of novelistic effect, an unsettling doubt in a work that presents itself as largely autobiographical.

Such doubts aside, *The Dragon's Village* will for many Western readers be a much easier way of approaching an otherwise hardly accessible area of history than would, for example, the more profound and thoroughgoing account of land reform offered by William Hinton in *Red Dawn*. Fine writing this is not; but the vividly conveyed experience contained in it makes it a book well worth having.

Getting the bird in Turkey

By Peter Lewis

YASHAR KEMAL:
The Saga of a Seagull -
Translated from the Turkish by Thilda Kemal

250pp. Collins and Harvill. £6.95.
0 00 261748 X

For the most part modern Turkish literature remains a closed book to the English-speaking world: publishers have been conspicuously reluctant to commission translations. The contemporary Turkish writer who has most successfully broken through this barrier is Yashar Kemal, whose prize-winning first novel *Memed, My Hawk* was a best-seller in Turkey in 1955 and soon won him an international reputation. Since then his steady stream of fiction has been translated into a number of languages, the person responsible for the English versions of his recent books, including the latest, *The Saga of a Seagull* (published in Turkey in 1976), being his wife Thilda.

To say that *The Saga of a Seagull* is about an eleven-year-old boy who adopts as a pet a young seagull with a broken wing might suggest some embarrassing piece of sentimental whimsy built on the child-plus-animal formula. Alternatively, it might suggest a modish, cynically ghoulish reversal of the predictable formula. The opening, in which the boy Salih first finds a small dead coot on the beach and immediately afterwards discovers the damaged "baby seagull", does the child's naive philosophizing about death, and the repetitions of the word "baby", have an ominously gothic ring to them. Similarly, repeated mentions of "the little town" are far from reassuring because of the fairy-tale punance of "little" in this context. Is the formula going to triumph hands down over Kemal? Fortunately not, although he does walk an amoral tightrope none too steadily for the first few chapters.

This early part of the novel concentrates on Salih's successful attempt to keep the injured bird alive and his less successful attempt to find someone able to repair its broken wing or even understand his sympathetic identification with the gull. Birds have long featured symbolically in folklore and literature. (Coleridge's "altars, Ibsen's wild duck, Chekhov's seagull), and Kemal exploits the symbolic potential of the young seabird inep-

able of flight to evoke the situation of Salih himself, a loner trapped in a difficult family situation where he is constantly at war with his histrionic and warped grandmother whom he has most often offended by ridiculing the predicament that sustains her. Yet the contrast is not simply between helplessness and power. Salih grows to be determined, courageous, and resilient, as well as highly imaginative. Faced with the family verdict that the bird will die, and with his grandmother's sadistic gleam at the prospect, Salih defies common sense and adult opinion. The contrast is more properly between innocence and experience, between child-like faith in possibility and adult scepticism born of defeats and eroded sensibilities.

At this point, fairly early in the narrative, Kemal interpolates a long and leisurely flashback lasting nearly half the novel. This flashback presents a younger Salih at a time when he is obsessed with an expensive toy lorry he sees in a shop and cannot hope to buy or have bought for him. After various efforts to raise money, he resorts to stealing it from the wealthy boy whose father has bought the toy. The setting is a busy Black Sea fishing town - a very different milieu from Kemal's of the cotton-producing plains of Chukurova where he comes from. In presenting the world as seen by Salih, the novel conveys the extraordinary mixture of fantasy and reality in which he lives. To some extent Salih inhabits an Arabian Nights world of magic, legend, and the supernatural, but this merges with his everyday reality so that the two interpenetrate in a quasi-surrealist way. His awareness of reality, and the repetitions of the word "baby", have an ominously gothic ring to them. Similarly, repeated mentions of "the little town" are far from reassuring because of the fairy-tale punance of "little" in this context. Is the formula going to triumph hands down over Kemal? Fortunately not, although he does walk an amoral tightrope none too steadily for the first few chapters.

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that emerges from the novel is one of callousness, human blindness, mindless cruelty, and widespread corruption. Young right-wing thugs give Salih a terrible beating because he is wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt given to him by a tourist, although he has no idea who the portrait is of. The son of a wealthy and powerful man is immune from the law even though he deliberately runs down and kills a child in the street. Salih's hero, Metin, is gunned down at the end by an unnamed Colonel and his men when he challenges the Colonel's grossly unfair financial control of their smuggling enterprise. As a final embodiment of man's destructive potential, the completely covered seagull is killed by Salih's grandmother, here a representative of the older generation and its stifling power.

The principal symbol of freedom and imaginative flight is thus destroyed. Yet Salih remains undefeated, even when he suffers the disappointment of failing to catch the fishing boat he believes will take him to Istanbul and liberty. His creativity, his Blakean energy, survive, and in his modest way he achieves a triumph over his environment: the novel ends with him joining the blacksmith Ismail in the smithy to commence his apprenticeship in this "holy craft and so it has been since the day of the Prophet David, peace be upon him". The final image of Salih hammering the red-hot iron symbolizes his new-found maturity as he seeks to find an outlet for his creative energy through work in the real world. Since Kemal has taken a good look at the world, there is no facile optimism, cheap sentimentality, or naive humanism in his moving and positive conclusion - but rather a hard-won belief in the ability of goodness and love to endure.

Launched in January 1968, at a cost to subscribers of 2s 6d (plus 3d postage) per issue, the little magazine *Sampyre* has gradually established itself as one of the best outlets for contemporary poetry in this country. Now, however, with its fortieth issue (available from Heronshaw, Fish Pond Lane, Holmer Brook, Ipswich at 60p), the magazine has decided to close. In a farewell note, the founder-editors Michael Butler and Kemble Williams suggest that they are winding up *Sampyre* not because of financial difficulty (since 1972 the magazine has had steady Eastern Arts support) but because they have found it increasingly hard to keep the magazine small: originally local and East Anglian in character, it now has a world-wide circulation.

On the steps of Russian realism

By Valentine Cunningham

MICHAEL MOORCOCK:

Byzantium Endures
40pp. Seeker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 28458 8

"It is hard", Randall Jarrell once said, "to write even a competent naturalistic story, and when you have written it what happens? - someone calls it a competent naturalistic story." *Byzantium Endures* is a competent naturalistic novel, about the Ukraine, the Russian Revolution and the ensuing Civil War. Its subject is *echt* twentieth century. "I am a child of my century and as old as the century." I was born in 1900, on 1 January; thus refugee memoirist Colonel Pyat, old clothes merchant of London's Portobello Road (rhyming by the way with the narrator of Salman Rushdie's recent *Midnight's Children*, as old as modern India, born on the stroke of her independence). But for all the modernity of his matter, Pyat's manner wouldn't have seemed too anachronistic in the nineteenth century.

Michael Moorcock is, of course, extraordinarily prolific. And here he is displaying amazing versatility as well, zipping nimbly across the fictitious scale from Sci-Fi to FI, outstanding the generality of authors, who usually take all their time just settling down at only one of those resorts. And his gear change, from the future we've got used to this being at, to the recent past of this novel, has gone astoundingly smoothly. What's more, there's no gainsaying the exotic animation of the scene he's touched down on: Odessa gangsters, St Petersburg bohemians, revolutionary brigands, Trotsky's mistress, drugs, sex war, great globs of stagey blood-letting, the grim rise of the Steel Tsar Stalin. But still it does all rather come out as, well, not much more than gingered-up Melvin Bragg.

Admittedly, Michael Moorcock's Bragg does have - and it's a relief to keep discovering so - a good deal of ginger in it. Indeed, though feeling quite at home in the technique, would be pleased at its zestful application to modern themes, Colonel Pyat's eye has been educated by the sort of movie that made realism sexy: exciting, his narrative pauses at the very Odessa steps that were to become so memorable in *BatleShip Potemkin*. Pyat, who claims to be an engineer - educated in gadgetry of all sorts - who is obsessed by inventions, besotted by bicycles and planes, enjoys a lucky fit between his enthusiasms and the age of the conceptual apotheosis of the train. Zola means come most aptly alive again amidst Pyat's mechanistically aesthetic chums, the Futurists, and at the moment of train-borne Trotskyism.

Agreeably, Pyat's affection for detail is not always doggedly plodding. Moorcock can't emulate Günter Grass, nor even Salman Rushdie. In their continual use of the inevitably odd angle, the revealing connexion but there are moments at least where he Grasses very nicely on history. Pyat, Jewish-looking child and self-proclaimed inventor of the auto-gyro, lies high over Kiev's Babi gory, where later, in the German death-camp there, "so many Jewish souls were to fly to Heaven". Odessa, we're told, was packed with people selling food, drinks, charts, papers: "How Russia was full of men, women and children with trays around their necks to those days". Hooked on cocaine, Pyat is eager to demonstrate that the "entire Revolution, that entire Civil War, was fought on 'snow'." We see Stalin watching Mickey Mouse films in a huge Kremlin kiosk, "while Russia died at his command". A crazed anarchist dynamite Odessa church armed with a Fabergé hour-glass. Russia empties out into the world a crowd of chefs - and waiters-to-be, dispensers of Chicken à la Kielf, Bouef Stroganoff and Strawberry Romanoff. The Cheka's machine-guns "go *cheka-cheka-cheka* just to prove what mercy meant: a quick death rather than a slow one".

But, alas, for every arresting detail, there are paragraphs of mere detail.

logue: lists of what's to eat, what's in apartments, rooms, bars, dives, wagons-lits, what's on station platforms and quay-sides, what people are wearing. Moorcock shows the Russian men-turn very fetchingly: "The variety of bortsches, and yushkas, the kuleshnik, the schipanka, the zntirka, kulish and rassulnik, the herrings and boiled sturgeon and sardines, the roast meat with sauerkraut and prunes and buckwheat hash". He's clearly learned a lot from the likes of Konstantin Paustovsky. (Paustovsky's *Story of a Life* is praised in a historical Appendix on the Russian Civil War.) Paustovsky's wistful rich Russian particularity represented, however, the blowsy ultra-decadence of a style. Moorcock's novel has fallen precisely by falling far largely overripe literary fruit.

Overripe of all things in *Byzantium Endures* is its narrator, Colonel Pyat, or Dimitri Pyatinski, alias Dimitri Mitrofanovitch Kryschelt, alias Maxim Arturovitch Pyatinski. A self-exculpating *moraliste* and man of violence, is an egregiously senile boaster. His talents, according to himself, abound. They don't include the talent to amuse. He's good, he says, at languages. His narratives of Odessa life outline Isaac Babel's. His dystopianism is more original than Huxley's or Orwell's. If people had only needed his gush of inventiveness he'd be as famous as Einstein - and anyway Einstein sneaked his assistant's ideas. Sikorski of the helicopters came from the Ukraine, but he had nothing on Pyat. Pyat anticipated, he crows, aeroplanes, rocket propulsion, aircraft carriers; he tried out Insers, muscra, technological marvels galore. He also,

it turns out, forged his Diplomat in Engineering. No minute Milton, in fact, ever turned out in any very good way. Pyat quickly learns to invent all his claims and his disclaimers, to suspect his kept-up stories about his Cossack father and his denials of Jewishness, to wonder about his perpetual hostility towards homosexuals, Semites and members of the Secret Police. And we're made really to suffer his insufferable tirades.

As the "editor" of Pyat's memoir (who signs himself "Michael Moorcock") admits, Pyat's "was not a pleasant personality, and his intolerance and passionately-held right-wing views were hard to take". Jews, Roman Catholics, Bolsheviks, Muslims, the BBC, queers, the Hebrew God, people on housing estates: they're all scathed in burst after burst of hotly furious prose. First Holy Russia, then Great Britain; on the Pyat reading, the darkly barbarian hordes of the East, semitic, Carthaginian, self-invaded and destroyed the sacred courts of civilization, Byzantium, the Holy Empires of the Christ of the Greeks.

Pyat's imit paragraphs persuade only as boiling oil or rubber treads persuade. As he raves he becomes as bleakly unlovable as any old con. If only, one keeps thinking, one didn't have to sit through quite so much of his rabid rubbish. If only, as well, one didn't get the occasional feeling that, the Ukraine, but he had nothing on Pyat. Pyat anticipated, he crows, aeroplanes, rocket propulsion, aircraft carriers; he tried out Insers, muscra, technological marvels galore. He also,

Miraculous births

By Helen McNeil

MARY GORDON:
The Company of Women
291pp. Cape. £6.50.
0 224 11935 4

The Company of Women is a symbolic meditation disguised as a realistic Bildungsroman. Mary Gordon's study of faith, love and chastity begins with four Catholic women, the girl Felicitas, and their priest Father Cyprian all poised in an ecstasy of hope:

... the child was their hope. It was a queer life that Felicitas would have, a hard life, but how fortunate, Elizabeth thought, to be like Mary, Martha's sister, like Felicitas, the favored one, the chosen.

By the end of the novel, Felicitas has grown up, had an illegitimate child, and apparently failed to fulfil her early promise. On a deeper level her worldly failure has only confirmed why Felicitas was "called after the one virgin martyr whose name contained some hope for ordinary human happiness". By choosing to live a life of saintly ordinariness, she illuminates the lives of her mother, godmothers and priest, and leads them to accept their coming deaths. "I have never been happier in my life", thinks Elizabeth, "one of Felicitas's fairy godmothers, 'I will be happy'. Father Cyprian, like Felicitas himself, is an apparent failure, feels himself ready to leave it all behind me, in the hands of God, in the hands of a girl". When Felicitas embraces her iconic Marian role as mother of a child "with two fathers", the mantle of hope can pass on to her daughter Linda, "superior to all other girls her age in beauty, grace, and wisdom". In scene ignorance, Linda and Father Cyprian pray secretly for the ordination of women in their lifetime.

Mary Gordon offers enough information in *The Company of Women* to indicate the limiting ironies in Felicitas's choice. Felicitas believes that love is a means of self-protection, and she is about to marry a stupid man for the safety of his silence. It is not enough to be saved; she needs to be safe too. The entire structural and stylistic thrust of *The Company of Women* moves in the

opposite direction, however, away from irony and towards lyrical sincerity. Mary Gordon accomplishes the seemingly task of convincing us that women can still derive happiness from the Catholic church's traditional image of their role. All this happiness is hard to take, when it entails living a life in which nothing new will ever happen again. Part of the price *The Company of Women* extracts from its readers is acceptance of a serenely unimpaired quietism; the novel itself also undergoes a peculiar levelling, establishing calm by a controlled, slow pace, symmetry, flat characters, and a minimalist prose laden with appositions and variations. It resonates with wisdom in its discursive passages, and its characters' meditations have an almost refectionary lucidity, as if in modernist fragmentation and stream of consciousness were aberrations that one can now do without. By her choice of life Felicitas similarly "erases" abortions, the 1960s and dogs called Bob, Che, and Jesus: she has her baby, moves to a small town in upstate New York, and re-christens the miserable dogs Joe, Jay and Peeches.

Mary Gordon is least successful in her depiction of Felicitas's life in history (university radicalism in the 1960s, hippie life style and so on). Felicitas's experience of the world, the flesh, and the devil is depicted with heavy nature; she falls for a relentlessly minor devil of a professor who prays to "St. Herther" Marcuse and keeps a commune of grovelling girlfriends which demagogically parodies Father Cyprian's company of secular virgin martyrs. Like Luis Buñuel's saintly Viridiana, whose collapse into the merely human is shown by her sheer need of other people's company, Felicitas needs Robert's body and loses herself so as to give him a strictly incidental pleasure.

In this middle phase of the novel, Felicitas is following an "education narrative". *Final Payments*, Mary Gordon's first novel, was a genuine Bildungsroman, moving from stasis to progress; the heroine's bout of humility was delusional and self-destructive. In *The Company of Women* one of the author's most powerful meditations is about what constitutes the story of a woman. When Felicitas is filled with teenage pride and prejudice, she adores Jane Austen and foolishly identifies with Elizabeth Bennet; mean-

Blackpool flights

By David Nokes

ELIZABETH TROOP:

Darling Daughters
252pp. Granada. £6.95.
0 246 11458 4

MARGARET POWELL:

Maid and Mistresses
192pp. Michael Joseph. £6.50.
0 7181 2023 X

For over a decade women novelists have been asserting the central significance of their experience as women, yet, on the evidence of these novels, the habits of self-doubt and deference are a long time dying. The heroines of both books are timid spectators of lives which seem to take place beyond their reach or control. Like children spying on an adult world, they offer keyhole perspectives on existences they are ashamed to acknowledge.

Elizabeth Troop chooses a clumsy "novel within a novel" frame for her story. Her heroine, Kate, is a highly self-conscious novelist whose latest autobiographical work is being adapted for television. With a mixture of envy and relief, Kate hands over responsibility for acting out her own life to Abigail, a mobile and energetic young feminist from the RSC, while secretly fearing that the real experience of her life is more fully embodied in Eva, her mother, who is laid out like a waxwork dummy in her geriatric ward, sucking on a plastic tube.

There is a constant tendency in *Darling Daughters* to belabour significance. Ellic, the fictional version of Eva, lives in "a doll's house, standing in a row of doll's houses". The first book which little Sarah, the fictional version of Kate, picks from her father's shelves, mistaking it for a children's story is, inevitably, *The Doll's House*. Fifteen pages and several years later, Sarah ponders with sudden irony, "What happened to Nora? They hadn't written that one. Perhaps they were acting it out." So many obtrusive references to the mimicry of all feminist works should indicate to even the least perceptive reader that we are supposed to be deep in liberated territory. Residual doubts that this is so stem from the obstinately deferential tone of the book, a tone of surrender rather than of struggle. Ms Troop allows Sarah to detect echoes not only of Ibsen, but also of Joyce and Proust - dangerous echoes, these, indicating only too clearly the insecurities and limitations of a more fragile talent. A closer analogy is with the world of Beryl Bainbridge's *A Quiet Life*: a world of overcrowded rooms and mousy peas, of furtive desires and suffocating domestic routines.

The setting for *Darling Daughters* is Blackpool, though Ellic "had never bothered to penetrate the vulgar parts of the town, with the tower erect over the central beach". This phallic structure is the presiding symbol of rejected maleness in the book, a maleness that is both intimidating and irrelevant. Sarah's father, a failed Labour candidate, is chased from the house by her grandmother, a formidable matriarch clad in her armour of hide-stocking and tight corsets, who intimidates a tyrannous regime of household duties, sanctified by a tireless litany of moralizing proverbs. Mad Jack the flasher, his raincoat stained with Milky Way, is all that remains of the repudiated male, as the experiences of the book are handed on, in an attenuated and joyless succession, down the female line. For a while poetry seems to offer an escape from this inheritance, but Sarah's Tolstoyan poet, Lev, proves as unreliable as all the other men in the book. Inexplicable of testing her readers' reactions, Ms Troop plants a judgment on *Darling Daughters* by having Kate, the TV producer remark of Blackpool, "Innocence, that's what it has, and vulgarity, but honest with it. It's a bit like yam - and the book." Such complacent elbow-midging is Kate's neurotic reaction to a childhood whose domestic routines were made secure by Vick's vapour rub, and Chilprope vests.

For Mrs Green, the cook in Margaret Powell's *Maid and Mistresses*, Blackpool means not innocence, but independence. It is there that she goes, to set up as a seaside landlady, after a lifetime in service. This latest installment in Mrs Powell's seemingly endless evocations of the below-stairs world of the 1920s is characteristically lightweight and sentimental. Its chirpy tone is resolutely set against discovering any of the social realities of the world that it purports to present. The adolescent heroine, Etta, is an ideally dutiful kitchen maid in an ideally happy household. Attractive and intelligent, she has her portrait painted by a fashionable society artist, and while still only seventeen is promoted to the rank of full cook.

It is work of fantasy, with just the lightest smattering of anecdotal humour to stiffen the syllabus. The novel is written with the stunted correctness of someone whose language has been acquired at a remove from experience. Etta's fastidious attention to her housework and grammar are crumbs of politeness from the great house table. Yet it often seems to be the author, not her heroine, who is on tip-toe to be genteel. "Etta hated standing around in the street, the eyenore of errand boys, and often of their ribald remarks and whistles." Here, surely, it is Margaret Powell herself who is at pains to express correct sentiments in correct language. What *Maid and Mistresses* interestingly demonstrates, despite its own more trivial intentions, is that it was partly by making servants ashamed of their own language and experiences that the upper classes ensured the hierarchy below-stairs was every bit as rigid and formal as that above.

Originally published in 1960, when Prince Amis gave it his "first-novel prize of the year", Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls* has just been re-issued by Weidenfeld (188pp. £6.50, 0 297 77982 4). Other recent reissues include paperback editions of three novels by Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber* and *Heroes and Villains* (King Penguin, £1.95 each) and *The Magic Toyshop* (Virago, £2.50).

The uncertainties of Ottawa

By H. S. Ferns

ROBERT BOWEN, IAN DRUMMOND, JOHN ENGLISH
Canada since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism
489pp. University of Toronto Press.
\$12.00
0 8020 2417 3

R. KENNETH CARTY and W. PETER WATKINS
Entering the Eighties
Canada in Crisis
198pp. Oxford University Press.
Paperback, \$2.95.
0 19 540360 9

In the 1920s, as the revolution was drawing to its end, a dispirited Mexican said sadly, "Poor Mexico! So far from God and so close to the United States!" A similar remark might be made about Canada as the Canadians face up to the consequences of forty years of profound change brought about not by revolutionary bloodshed but by productivity and prosperity.

When Canada reached war "at Britain's side" in 1939, the Canadians were still a religious people not just in the sense that they were churchgoers, but morally and intellectually. No serious politicians and very few educated people espoused ideas not rooted in the truths to be found in the teaching of the Christian churches — Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox — and the synagogues. Political differences still had a sectarian Irish and reformation flavour, and even the socialists, few in number, were for the most part Christians of the United Church variety. Radical politicians like William Aherlert were more often than not fundamentalists. Dissidents in Quebec were men of God as much as men of the people. Maurice Duplessis may have despised bishops and fought with archbishops, but he went to Mass regularly and ordered a large crucifix to be placed in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City. Those well acquainted with Maurice considered this "smut politics," but it was also a recognition that sacred symbolism was still so important for political success as patronage and government contracts.

Even as Duplessis was hanging up his crucifix and making fun of the Jews, the disposition of Canadians, in matter what language they spoke, was rapidly changing. Ten years of depression and five years of what life is about and what one wants from it. Robert Bowen, Ian Drummond and John English write:

In 1944 the Canadian Chamber of Commerce undertook to look into the future. It polled Canadians in Kitchener and Vancouver to discover what they hoped for and expected at war's end. The responses indicated a desire for a richer material life: refrigerators, cars, and a house in the suburbs. Possibly because they were not asked they did not express a desire for a new constitution, world government, or international workers' solidarity. They did not get any of these things, but they did get refrigerators, cars, and a house in the suburbs, not to mention television sets, swimming pools, and microwave ovens. They also got family allowances, unemployment insurance, health insurance, and contributory old age pensions. Economic progress made all these things possible. The period from 1945 to 1980 was one of almost uninterrupted economic growth whose benefits were widely shared among all levels of Canadian society and in all regions.

When the war ended there was no grim To Do list in Canada. VE Day was a strange experience; for the jubilation was short-lived, with a current of dread. Would the wartime prosperity come to an end,

and the days of unemployment and the harsh struggle for survival soon return? Canadians longed for the good life, and they defined it in very material terms. This united them in a very compelling way, which transcended the barriers of language, religion and class.

With his preternatural capacity for sensing the feelings of the people, Prime Minister Mackenzie King had anticipated the requirements for the political survival at the war's end of his party and administration. This meant more initiative in peacetime on the part of Government than anything he or anyone else in Canada had ever dreamed of. Canada embarked on an experiment in Keynesian economic and fiscal management which enjoyed a phenomenal success.

The war itself provided the experience and created the confidence which enabled the politicians to accept advice about economic and fiscal policy which none of them wholly approved of or even understood. At the centre of this policy-making were the deputy minister of finance, Clifford Clark, W. A. Mackintosh, Graham Towers (Governor of the Bank of Canada), R. B. Bryce and Alex Skelton. The war demonstrated that Canada had a productive capacity, and a parallel capacity to bear a burden of taxation and lending to the public authorities, beyond what anyone could reasonably have anticipated in the years of depression. It was the object of these economic technicians to devise a policy which could replace the demand created by war with a demand function sufficiently strong to run the economy effectively in peacetime.

These men were not "free lunch" economists of the kind at whom Milton Friedman and F. A. Hayek point accusing fingers. For them the key to prosperity was capital investment, some by the state but most by private business. As far as consumer demand was concerned they approached this cautiously. A big handout along the lines of the Beveridge Report (Canada produced a parallel Marsh Report) was rejected, but Clark was enthusiastic about family allowances and a generous programme of education and retraining for demobilized members of the Armed Forces. This was a mix of the politicians and particularly Mackenzie King, found just right: electorally appealing to the needs of the people and satisfactory to business interests. The prospect of every family receiving cash directly from the Federal Government was a sure-fire electoral asset to the Liberals.

Canada's economic policy advisers, like Keynes himself, assumed that governments and politicians are rational beings and capable of running an economy sensibly by a system of cyclical budgeting: stimulating demand and investment when employment is falling and restraining them when employment is rising towards 96-100 per cent of the work force.

The history of Canada since 1945 as told by Messrs Bowen, Drummond and English strongly suggests that the Keynesian assumption that the politicians, bureaucrats and the people generally are rational and capable of enlightened self-interest is unspurious. Politicians want power and bureaucrats want jobs and empires. Their need to recruit political support causes them to forget the necessary conditions for enduring economic stability and growth. Governments become overblown. Public services become more systems of income distribution than they are services. The Canadian Post Office, for example, delivers letters more slowly than in the days of steam and parcels more slowly than in the days of rail, but the postal employees do well, and they go on strike whenever they think their incomes are not appropriate to their station in life.

Happiness, political unity, and civility are at best vague and uncertain concepts. It is pretty clear, however, that prosperity in Canada has not contributed markedly to producing heaven on earth in the northern half of North America. There are twice as many Canadians as there were forty years ago. They live longer and individually they consume more than they have ever done. They travel more. They have more opportunities for education and recreation than ever before. They help to feed the Russians and the Chinese. They do not seem to do much harm to other people. Judging by their rhetoric they do not appear to like their American neighbours very much, but they cooperate with them in everything that matters in both of them. But ...?

The essays in *Entering the Eighties: Canada in Crisis* are worried up to a point: maybe Canada is a political community is going to fall apart. One of them, Michael Bliss, questions the wisdom of "too much government". His title encapsulates his case. "Rich by Nature, Poor by Policy": the State and Economic Life in Canada. The very existence of ten provincial governments and one federal government competing among themselves for the allegiance, money and resources of the community is the root of the problem. Bliss likens the addiction to government to the cigarette habit, fatal for some and debilitating for all.

Canada since 1945 lends some support to this argument. Obviously the smoothly running nation over which Louis St Laurent presided from 1948 to 1957 is no longer "too good to be true". Looking back with the advantage of hindsight one can discern certain fortuitous factors which made it possible for the Ottawa mandarins and their political masters to do so well for more than a decade after the end of World War Two. They were, for example, able to apply the Keynesian prescriptions for economic management rationally and consistently because they had few political problems. The provincial governments were then still weak and unlearned in the ways of bureaucratic politics. The initiative in economic matters was still the prerogative of the federal government.

Once, however, the economy was working well, the provincial governments began to flourish and employ more skilled staff and particularly to exercise the powers which are rightfully and constitutionally theirs under the British North America Act. More and more the Federal Government lost the power to control public spending, and more and more were the provincial politicians able to mobilize political support demanding costly services in health, education, transportation and welfare, which the federal government was expected to support either by subsidies or by according the provinces the opportunity to tax and spend. This did not happen just in the



"The Toast", 1923, a pencil drawing by William Roberts which is part of the Modern Gallery's annual "Summer Portfolio" of paintings, drawings and prints, at 35 St George Street, Hammer Square, London WC1R 9EA until July 31.

case of Quebec but everywhere.

The federal leaders, whether Diefenbaker or Pearson, were not equal to this new state of affairs. Diefenbaker was an emotional populist and no administrator; Pearson was weak and much disposed to walk away from situations he could not face. For ten years Ottawa was soft at the top.

The same cannot be said of the present Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. No politician without a will of steel and an indifference to public opinion could have dealt with the terrorist infection in the way he did in October, 1970. But Trudeau has the defects of his virtues. He is an intellectual and an aristocrat indifferent to economic problems and little disposed to understand them. As a result, the Canadian economy is more or less out of control. Even bureaucrats in Ottawa are beginning to face up to the need to provide an income from the sale of government services. Witness *The Way Out*, written by two senior bureaucrats, A.R. Bailey and D. G. Hall, sponsored and published by an organization the chairman of which is the Clerk of the Privy Council of Canada (retired).

More seriously, Trudeau does not seem sufficiently to recognize that the centre of economic power in Canada is shifting away from Ontario and Quebec and that a new constitution imposed by sleight of hand in the interest of Toronto and Montreal will not work as it did when western Canada was a nearly empty colonial dependency of Ottawa and the Maritime Provinces were peopled by fishermen and farmers with little capacity to embrace the federal government. New constitutional arrangements must take account of the fact that the western Canadians can turn off the gas taps and freeze the majority of Ontarians, who no longer have coal or wood-fired heating equipment. And now, being far from God, this is just what they might do if sufficiently provoked.

Information please

Roy Campbell: I am making a collection of the poet's letters with a view to their publication. I would appreciate your help in appealing to any of your readers who may have received or possess letters from my father to contact me or if possible send me the originals, which will be photocopied and returned.

Anna de Carondelet (née Campbell), Casa Escondida, Colares, 2710 Sintra, Portugal.

Charles Clairmont (1798-1879), Charles Gault Clairmont (1795-1850), Fanny Indey Gault (1794-1816), John and Maria Gault (d 1836), and Henry Revely (d 1875), members of the Shelley circle: any letters to or by them, any Galtine diaries or notebooks, for an edition of letters and journals of the circle.

David M. Stocking and Marion K. Stocking, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin 53511.

Eliza Cook, Victorian poet and journalist (1812-1889): whereabouts of any original archival material relating to her.

Kathryn Longmeade, 422 Olive Road, London NW2 2UU.

Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820): a group of scholars

based at the University of Manitoba is pleased to announce that it intends to publish an authoritative edition of his writings and papers. The editors will include all correspondence to Lord Selkirk as well as all writings by him. We would be pleased to hear from any holders of Selkirk papers, particularly those located outside the major archives and libraries in Britain and North America, who would wish their material included in this edition.

J.M. Bumsted, General Editor, The Papers of Lord Selkirk, St John's College, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada R3T 2M5.

An equatorial among the Eskimos

By James Kirkup

TETE-MICHEL KPOMASSIE:
L'Africain du Groenland
309pp. Paris: Flammarion.

This is surely the most extraordinary book to come out of black Africa. It is the story of the author's boyhood and youth with his parents, relatives and twenty-six brothers and sisters in the bush and forests of Togoland. It goes on to tell of how, still a young boy, he escaped from his traditional, python-worshipping home and made his way all alone through Africa, Europe and a terrifyingly stormy Arctic Sea to the place of his dreams — Greenland, where he spent three years in the eternal snows, to the far north of the world's biggest island of ice, almost penniless, sharing the daily (and nightly) life of the Eskimos or Inuit, as they should properly be called.

The book, written in a very fluent, candid style, is the work of a natural writer and is a horn of plenty for landscape and men. It is divided into three parts. In Part One, the author describes his boyhood and youth in a traditional Togoland village, an account which, in my experience, has never been equaled for its vivid humour, excitement and poetry. In it he tells of happy hunting excursions for lizards, and exactly how they are caught. His adolescent companions would cook them to the point of the fat, which is rubbed carefully on their penises, which it is supposed to make bigger and thicker and stronger.

But one day, while on gathering coconuts, Tété has a traumatic experience. At the top of a wind-blown coconut palm, he is suddenly confronted by an enraged python and her brood in their lofty nest. The boy is so petrified by terror, he can hardly move, but eventually begins scrambling down the trunk, the python after him. He manages to knock the python to the ground, but at once it starts gliding back up the trunk towards him, hissing and baring its fangs. In desperation, the boy throws himself from the trunk and falls unconscious when he hits the ground.

Attracted by the screams he hears, a brother runs to his help, see the disappearing python and assumes that he has been mortally wounded by the reptile. The boy is covered with bruises, but no bones are broken. They carry him back to his hut, where his father tries to find where the python has bitten him: the boy is still unable to speak and tell of his ordeal. When he regains consciousness, he lies motionless and apathetic for a long time, despite various native remedies that are applied.

Finally, his father, who is an adept of a sect of python-worshippers, takes him, with his mother, on a journey into the forest to visit a sorcerer, a sort of pythoness, who lives with pythons in a hut specially constructed so that they can glide at will in and out of the holes she has made in the walls. After ceremonies and incantations, the boy, still quaking with horror, is released from the python spell in a very powerful dramatic scene, and is allowed to return home. He is healed. But his father promises to dedicate him to the python cult.

During his convalescence, the boy discovers a book about Greenland on the shelves of a missionary library in Lomé. At once he is fascinated by the idea of this distant land of snow and ice, so different from his own country. He reads as many books as he can find about Greenland and the Arctic, and studies atlases of the polar regions and northern Europe. He feels once that he has to escape from his home, and from the dedication to

the python-priestess — a prospect he views with disgust.

Pretending that he is only going on a short visit to a relative, he obtains his parents' consent to travel, just after his sixteenth birthday, to Port-Bouet, a few kilometres from Abidjan. He works his way there by helping the driver of a "taxi-brousse", a desert truck used for transporting goods and people in the wilds of Africa. He finds a temporary job in Abidjan, and his aunt wants to find him a girl and make him settle down there. But family life is not for this adventurer. He makes his way, with almost no money, and with incredible slowness and difficulty, doing odd jobs here and there, to Accra, capital of Ghana, where for a short while he works as a radio announcer for "The Voice of Ghana".

After a few months, he has earned enough money for a sea voyage from Takoradi to Dakar in a schooner, calling on the way at Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gambia. He arrives in Dakar with almost no money left. But with customary self-reliance and adaptability, he finds a post as translator at the Embassy of Ghana. He stays there only in order to save enough cash: after six months he gives in to his notice and leaves for Mauritania, travelling from the capital, Nouakchott, by Land Rover to Port-Étienne (now known as Nouadhibou). His plan was to cross the Sahara from there to Algiers, but when he finds that there is no longer any kind of transport available, and unwilling to cross the desert on foot, he returns to Dakar, where with typical optimism and enterprise he obtains a post at the Indian Embassy. Six months later, he again resigns his post, and with the money thus saved manages, finally, to get to Marseille, and he gives a glowing and meticulous account of this, his first sight of European civilization.

He soon moves on to Paris, where he is befriended by various people. I think it is one proof of the author's extraordinary character and sunny disposition that everywhere he goes he makes friends. Indeed, people soon take to him, and love him, and he says that his last host in Paris, with whom he lived for one year, is his "other father." His life in Paris, and later in Bonn (staying one year with a German lady and her young cousin Carola, whom he had helped with their luggage at the station, and who spontaneously invited him to stay with them) is heartily and humorously recounted. Finally, he moves to his last stepping-stone, Copenhagen.

Like many Africans, Tété is a clever linguist, and besides his native tongue and French he soon picks up German and Danish — just as later he will pick up the various languages of Greenland.

The second part of *L'Africain du Groenland* tells of the long sea voyage from Copenhagen on a cargo boat, through a terrible storm and into the gathering ice and cold of Arctic waters. Again he has very little money, though his "father" in Paris is to send him a small allowance every month. He does not possess adequate clothes, nor much more than a couple of thick pullovers. His descriptions of the Arctic seas, of ice and then drifting icebergs, are masterly, fresh, seen with a naive yet marvellously observant eye. He tells of the Arctic summer's lengthening days, of the midnight sun. The cold becomes so intense he can hardly breathe.

Then they pass Cape Farvel, in the extreme south of Greenland, and the ship enters the harbour of Julianehavn, called by the Eskimos K'ukortoq, "the White Place", after the masses of drifting icebergs. A great crowd of Inuit is waiting to welcome the boat. They are laughing and shouting, and joking with

the crew and passengers. Tété has stayed below until the very last minute. As soon as he appears on deck, the women lower their eyes at the sight of this black giant. But gradually they regain their friendly smiles, and come forward to welcome him with true Greenland hospitality. He hears them muttering compliments about him. But many of them, and especially the children, think he is a supernatural being — for one of their "spirits" living in the snowy mountains" is a black man. However, Tété, with his good nature, big smile and wonderful friendliness, soon persuades them that he is human, and here, as in Africa and Europe, everyone takes to him at once, and all compete to offer him hospitality.

The rest of the book is a moving account of his friendship with the Inuit, a friendship so deep and so natural that it goes beyond all our western notions of morality, for in true Eskimo fashion Tété is offered wives, sisters and daughters as his bed companions everywhere he wanders. He describes the im-

ness of the smelt summer nights, the drunken parties, the village dances, the life of exorbitant Danes, the sexual habits, the hunting and fishing, and always the extraordinary food — blubber mostly, whitefish (raw), walrus fat, seal intestines, strips of dried reindeer meat, and particularly dog meat, the flesh of those "huskies" so romanticized by writers like Jack London, but here shown clearly in their true light, as vicious, quarrelling, bloodthirsty and child-eating.

The winter comes, and we are told of paralyzing snowstorms, of long treks with dog-team and sled across snow and ice between distant villages. And all the time, Tété persists in moving further and further north, in search of the "real" Inuit, those unspoiled by drink and western civilization.

The third part of the book describes how he finds his ideal in a very poor, deprived, anti-social and indeed desperate situation, suffering starvation, poverty, isolation from the community, and a terrible

boredom that nearly drives them mad. This part of the book provides a realistic and unforgettable climax. At the end, when Tété leaves to go back to Europe and Africa, the old, poverty-stricken outcast he has been living with turns his head away to hide his tears, and refuses to look back at the author bounds the boat. A striking image of the depth of feeling, admiration and love this African generated everywhere he went.

The book has an excellent introduction by Jean Malaurie, well-known for his documentaries of the Arctic on French television, who makes the point that until now, all Arctic exploration has been from the side of the white man, often with disastrous results. This is the first example of a black man seeking the soul of the Inuit in the eternal snows, and finding his own, thus opening the way for future generations of non-white explorers, African and Oriental. This truly outstanding book is one that I literally could not put down until I had, to my great regret, finished it.

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

15A Epsom Road Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JT

St Louis's gift to St Denis

By Patrick O'Connor

LYNN HANEY:
Naked At The Feast
A Biography of Josephine Baker
336pp. Robson Books. £7.50.
0 85051 140 5

D. ANTOINETTE HANEY:
Black Women In American Bands
and Orchestras
319pp. The Scarecrow Press.
(UK distributor, Bailey Bros and Swin-
fen, Folkestone) £12.25.
0 8108 1346 7

The last time Josephine Baker played a season in London, at the Palladium in 1974, Timmi Mirani interviewed her for *The Guardian* and headed the article "She danced the Charleston dressed in ostrich feathers, on a drum, she danced in the Folies Bergère and in bananas; she saw a program woman there, howled; she won the Croix de Guerre." On that occasion she drew whoops of delight from the audience, whose ears had been lured by the pop group in the first hall of the programme, when she made her entrance on four-inch platform shoes, three elongated powder blue ostrich feathers nodding atop her turban. All the open glasses on the backs of the seats had been removed and half-way through her performance Josephine stopped to point a finger towards the stalls and said, "Oh Madam, you are shocking me. Yes, you there fiddling around with those little glasses. Don't do it please. Keep your illusions!" Any illusions one may have had about her are dispelled on the first page of Lynn Haney's biography where one reads: "Her feasts were on a grand scale - megalomaniac, unbridled egotism and wild squandering - faults that are beyond the imagination of le petit bourgeois. So they only saw the good things about Josephine. To them, she was a goddess."

The lives of actresses are inclined to fall either into the Cinderella category or that of "born in a trunk". Josephine was one of the former, the illegitimate daughter of an itinerant street musician and a waitress, her parents parted shortly after the birth of a second child. She grew up in St Louis where she was the scene of the worst race riots the United States had so far known. Twice married by the age of fifteen, when she was already a veteran of two years in vaudeville, Josephine's second mother-in-law used to find excuses to keep her out of the way if visiting, called. She was ashamed of Josephine's having darker hued skin than that of her own family. In the 1932 revue at the Casino de Paris she sang "Je voudrais être blanche pour moi quel bonheur!" and according to the Impresario Paul Derval at one time she used to rub her skin with lemon in the hope of lightening it. All her life Josephine battled against those prejudices which inflicted on her as a young girl wounds from which she never really recovered.

Following her first success in New York she was approached by Caroline Dudley who was planning to present the first all-black show in Paris. This was *La Revue Nègre* which opened at the Music Hall des Champs-Élysées in October 1925. Just over a year later Josephine had acquired a bogus Italian count as her lover and dancer, had starred in the first of many revues *à grand spectacle* at the Folies Bergère, and had opened her own *boîte de nuit*, Chez Josephine, in the rue Favart, incidentally during the same month that La Cigale opened on the Boulevard Montparnasse. She was twenty years old. Such was her fame that it even reached the dining table in the rue de Fleury where Alice B. Toklas named a dessert *Custard Josephine Baker*. The main ingredient was, of course, bananas but it also called for three table spoons of Liqueur Raspail which was, Miss Toklas

added when the recipe was published, "a liqueur for which it will probably be necessary to substitute another".

This book mixes the results of the author's research, which has produced a number of facts about Josephine Baker's life not to be found in the "official" versions, with stories enlivened by fifty years telling and re-telling (some of which are very funny, whether accurate or not) and a certain amount of creative licence. "As the Paris-Berlin express crossed the border and cut through the rich German heartland... Josephine sitting with her pet snake Kiki dozing in a bathtub on her lap, stared out at the countryside and wondered what lay ahead." Well no doubt she did, but this is the "art" of biography laid on a bit thick and I could have done with less of it.

Ms Haney mixes much of Josephine having posed for Picasso, Van Dongen, Calvet and others - but the artist who responded most readily to her as a model, who became as it were Toulouse-Lautrec to her Jane Avril, was Paul Colin. He attended the rehearsals of *La Revue Nègre* and made a poster of Josephine to advertise the show, and shortly afterwards a second one for the annual *Bal Nègre*. As well as illustrating two volumes of her memoirs he became the first of Josephine's Pantheon lovers. She appeared nearly every year until the outbreak of the war in a new revue either at the Casino or the Folies, but possibly her greatest triumph was the revival of Offenbach's *La Crémée* given at the Théâtre Marigny in 1934. One of the works of Offenbach's final years, the title role had been created by Anna Judic, of whom Reynaldo Hahn wrote: "Elle a une voix... petite voix... et elle chante des chansons de jeune fille avec une telle grâce que pas une seconde on n'est pas choqué. Son tact est fou. Elle dit des chansons 'raides' aussi; mais elle les dit de la façon fine et légère" - these words could equally well describe Josephine Baker's singing in the 1920s and 1930s.

"Josephine goes to war" is a great theme which has already been exploited to the full by her companion Jacques Abtey, who recruited her for the Résistance in the early days of the war, in his book *La Guerre Secrète de Josephine Baker*. She turned her whole energy to this cause, until the entry into the war of the United States, where she began a series of tours entertaining the troops. For the part she played during this era she was awarded both the Légion d'Honneur and the Croix de la Résistance; in her citation for the former it was noted that she displayed "un singulier remarquable" and her comrade Captain Pullot said "the destiny of our allies and consequently the Free French was written in part over the pages of *J'ai Deux Amours*".

After the war Josephine made a triumphant come-back, at the Folies Bergère where she launched her famous impersonation of Mary Queen of Scots in prison, singing Schubert's *Ave Maria*. Then she returned to America for a tour which began successfully enough but turned sour as her increasingly outrageous confrontations with restaurant, hotel and theatre own-

ers over Jim Crow race laws led to a smear campaign being launched against her by the right-wing gutter press. Josephine's political and ideological naïveté are apparent in accounts of most of her off-stage dealings - she was too much of a dreamer and a performer to make a success in the political arena of McCarthyite America. Instead she adopted twelve children of different nationalities to show the world that human beings could live in racial harmony. This "rainbow tribe" became her *raison d'être* for the last twenty-five years of her life.

This will not be the last book about Josephine Baker. She assured her own literary industry by pro-



Josephine Baker's unique, stemming from her childhood in St Louis, about the colour of her skin did not refrain her from the exotic revelation of her physical charms. Here she dances in a pose reminiscent of her first and silent film *Les Femmes des Folies Bergère* (1927). (Photograph by courtesy of H. Roger Viollet, Paris.)

ducing five separate autobiographies, the first in 1929, the last published in Paris the year after her death. Ms Haney has drawn heavily on this book (*Josephine*) but has found alternative versions of many events culled from 416 interviews she held with people who had known or seen the star. Memory plays tricks on everyone, so that in some cases Josephine's glorified version has more of the ring of truth. There are a number of errors which make me suspect that Ms Haney's interest has always been less in the history of *les années folles* than in peering at "the woman behind the legend". Thus we read of Picabia as the designer of the Ballet Relache as if it were the equivalent of the Ballet Suedois rather than an item on its programme; of the "art critic"

Pierre MacOrlan; Linne de Pougy is variously Puggy or Pounney and Offenbach is said to have died in 1890.

What would be of further interest is a theatrical biography of Josephine Baker. Once she has passed the years of Josephine's first success, Ms Haney pays no more attention to describing or chronicling her performances or the artists with whom she worked. She mentions, but hardly quotes, Janet Flanner and Colette, both of whom wrote about Josephine's Pantheon debut. Anna de Noailles was inspired to write a poem about her in a different book would have found room for this and for the

Despite the reservations I have expressed, this is an enjoyable account of Josephine Baker's adventures from rags to riches and back more times than an ordinary mortal could have borne.

It was with a group called the Jones Family Band that Josephine Baker's professional career began at the age of thirteen. Old Man Jones played a big brass horn, his wife played the trumpet and their daughter Doll played the fiddle. Neither Ma Jones nor Doll have found their way into Antoinette Haney's study of female instrumental players in the history of black music in the twentieth century. She has drawn the line where street musicians are concerned but the book collects together details of the careers of over one hundred American bands and orchestras in the last fifty or so years. A few are famous - Lil Armstrong (the second Mrs Louis Armstrong), Nellie Lutcher, Mary Lou Williams and Lovie Austin, but mostly they are just working musicians who made their careers without becoming stars or celebrities. No one need be surprised at the variety of experience and accomplishment that black women have contributed - Dr Hundy is herself a virtuoso flautist who has had a white career on the concert platform in America and Europe. Her book is in six sections, each dealing with a category of performer - string, keyboard, wind and percussion players, orchestra leaders and so on. An introduction to each section is then followed by the career biographies of the players selected. There are various charts and photographs to supplement these texts and examples of the firms used and the questions asked.

I could have wished that the two authors, Haney and Hundy, had managed to take a leaf out of one another's books. *Naked At The Feast* could do with some of the scholarly research and academic reticence that *Black Women in American Bands and Orchestras* displays and similarly a little more space between the facts would make the second book easier to read. To give but one example, the entries on Lovie Austin, whose career lasted from 1920 until her death in 1972, give the details of her various incarnations as pianist and band-leader (her group had the somewhat farfetched name of Lovie Austin and her Blues Serenaders) but nothing about her vivid personality or her famous leopard-skin upholstered Stutz Bearcat automobile which, according to Albert Hunter (the author of *Downhearted Blues* who still sings regularly in New York), "She could drive it like she bought an oil-field, she'd go so fast".

As this is the only reference book so far dealing with its subject, it will be of value to anyone interested in the history of American music. As a social study, the picture available is somewhat fragmented and the material might be re-presented in a different way to show how the problems affecting these women differed from those in Europe, and how they have changed - presumably for the better.

Josephine came from a background where she heard ragtime and jazz from her infancy but she was never a performer with the refined musical sensitivity that the true jazz musician has - that ability to improvise and create music as part of a team, with an instinct to anticipate and follow the other musicians' lead. The drilled, designed and long-rehearsed world of the theatre was her natural home. So although it was from the tradition of St Louis music that she learned the tremendous rhythmic vitality which was the basis for all her dancing and singing, her performance style owed just as much to the Quartet St Denis.

At that final London appearance in 1974 the high soprano had become a mellow contralto and the songs she sang, with the aid of a hand-mike, were just "standards" of the day to which she brought no particular distinction. The atmosphere changed suddenly though when she started to sing in French the song *Hillegarde* wrote for her "Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup" and then one was in the presence of the legend which, at the age of sixty-nine, one really had no right to expect to discover intact. At the end of the performance when the curtain was raised for the last of many calls, it stopped at about three feet from the floor to reveal just Josephine's legs, knees knocking in a vigorous Charleston.

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The antisemitic apocalypse

By Robert Alter

DAVID I. GOLDBSTEIN:
Dostoevsky and the Jews
210pp. University of Texas Press.
\$17.50.
0 292 71528 5

The title of this scholarly study might at first glance seem an invitation for the raising of eyebrows. Although, as the specialists remind us, Dostoevsky was a prolific journalist, polemicist, diarist, and letter-writer, we read him, after all, for the visionary power and the probing psychological insight of his novels, and in his fiction itself Jews are notable chiefly for their absence. There are occasional passing references, almost always hostile, to "the Yids", but the only actual fictional portrait of a Jew Dostoevsky ever undertook was the vignette in *The House of the Dead* of Isai Fomitich, who is a kind of exotic grotesque mascot for the other convicts, teased by them "as one teases dogs, parrots, or any sort of trained animal", regarded by them, and by the narrator, with a mixture of contemptuous amusement and condescending affection.

Apart from poor Isai Fomitich, the sole apparently Jewish figures in any of the novels are Lyashin, the conspirator who betrays his comrades in *The Possessed* and who would seem to be, as David Goldstein plausibly argues, a convert from Judaism; and the bizarre Jewish fireman in *Crime and Punishment* who makes a walk-on appearance - so brief as to go unnoticed by many readers - in order to witness Svidrigailov's suicide. Mr Goldstein's reading of the suicide scene in *Crime and Punishment* is a touchstone, at once fascinating and problematic, of his whole approach to this subject, and I should like to return to it presently.

Despite the remarkable paucity of fictional treatments of Jews by Dostoevsky, Goldstein's meticulous investigation of every relevant document together with every secondary text on the subject convinces one that he is dealing with a question of considerable importance for the understanding of this tormented, ambiguous genius. Goldstein traces what amounts to an ominous evolution in Dostoevsky's thinking about the Jews. At the beginning of his career, he had actually contemplated writing a play called *The Jew Yankel*, and since he probably knew no Jews firsthand until he met one among his fellow prisoners in Siberia, it seems safe to assume that this dramatic effort would have drawn heavily on the Russian nineteenth-century literary tradition of representing the Jew as a comic, grasping, servile, and finally unscrupulous type. Dostoevsky still clearly had that tradition much in mind when he transformed his recollections of an actual Jewish convict into the fictional portrait of Isai Fomitich.

Upon the writer's return to St Petersburg in 1859, he was at first associated with the more moderate voices of the Slavophile movement and was to some extent prepared to argue against the virulent antisemitism of the extremists. By stages, his own perception of the messianic vocation of the Russian nation became more extreme and with that shift, his xenophobia, including his hostility toward the Jews, grew more lurid. Goldstein suggests that the period of Dostoevsky's expatriation in Western Europe from 1867 to 1871 was a crucial time of transition in his thinking. Inflamed as he now became with a vision of the degeneracy of the West and Russia's redemptive role in history, he also became obsessed with the Jews as the arch-enemy of the great Christian consummation that could be achieved only through the Russian church and the Russian people. This obsession pursued him till his death in 1881. If he chose - and it is a choice worth pondering - not to deal with the Jews in the great novels he was writing during this decade, his personal correspondence from this period buzzes with recriminations against the vile Yids re-emerging around him, and his journals show clear and disturbing evidence of the obsession.

To be sure, he also makes statements in some of his articles about the need

to extend compassion to Jews on the grounds of Christian charity, and he could on occasion be respectful and even kindly toward Jewish correspondents who wrote to him to protest the antisemitic views he was espousing in his articles. The dominant theme, however, of Dostoevsky's journalistic and private statements in this last decade of his life is apocalyptic, an ugly picture etched in the acid juices of paranoia.

The antisemitic epithet "blood-sucker" is repeatedly invoked with a concrete sense of vampiric degradation: "The Yids will be drinking the people's blood and feeding on their debauchery and abjection" (article in the *Citizen*, May 1873). One begins to see how Dostoevsky could give enough credence to the libel that Jews murdered Christian children to see their blood ritually so that when Alyosha is questioned on the validity of this infamous accusation in *The Brothers Karamazov*, that Dostoevsky's paragon of spiritual integrity replies only, "I don't know." One of Dostoevsky's closest friends in these last years was the notorious Pobedonostsev, the Censor of State who formulated the Russian version of a Final Solution: "A third will emigrate, a third will be converted, and a third will perish."

Hewing close to the classic modern antisemitic fantasy, Dostoevsky imagines the international Jewish conspiracy carrying out its nefarious scheme through the twin branches of capitalism and socialism (in the unconscious, of course, logical opposites easily merge), and he expresses repeated fears that the dread yoke of these sons of darkness is about to fall on all Christendom. Here he is at his paranoid worst, in a Notebook entry from 1880:

The Yid and his bunk are now reigning over everything: over Europe, education, civilization, socialism - especially socialism, for he will use it to uproot Christianity and destroy its civilization. And when nothing but merely remains, the Yid will be in command of everything. For while he goes about preaching socialism, he will stick together with his own, and after all the riches of Europe will have been wasted, the Yid's bank will still be there. The antichrist will come and stand above the anarchy.

These are, I hardly need say, painful words to hear on the lips of a great writer - perhaps more than ever now, a generation after Hitler, when the equivalent of such pernicious language is trumpeted equally by a burgeoning neo-Nazism, from Argentina to Southern California, and by an international alliance of so-called Third World revolutionaries, many of them enjoying the prestigious forum of the United Nations. David Goldstein, as he reviews these troubling documents, strives to preserve an equipoise of the not-in-anger-but-in-sorrow sort, yet the cumulative effect of his book is scathing condemnation. He begins by affirming that he has no intention of denigrating Dostoevsky. He clearly possesses the most profound admiration for his brilliance as a novelist, and with all the sober marshalling of evidence over a literary love that has been cruelly disappointed: how could he, how could so great a writer have compromised himself through such vile words and thoughts?

There is an antipathetic response to that implicit question in the brief foreword by Joseph Frank. Curiously, what the foreword comes to is a major revision of the book's central argument, though a revision proposed with exquisite tact and genuine respect for the value of Goldstein's painstaking research. Goldstein, having uncovered the full nastiness of Dostoevsky's antisemitism, is unwilling to trust any of the occasional gestures of tolerance or compassion towards Jews that the writer made, tending to dismiss them as mere tactical manoeuvres dictated either by the rhetorical necessities of a particular essay or by the political constraints of a particular magazine. Professor Frank, on the other hand, suggests that Dostoevsky's ambiva-

lence and his habit of tempering need to be kept constantly in mind: "No more on this question than on any other should the restless, tormented, incredibly volatile Dostoevsky, whose greatest characters so often express the very views he most hated and feared, be reduced to any single point of view." Dostoevsky could, Frank goes on to say, be a passionate antisemite and, at least intermittently, feel guilt over his own antisemitism on the basis of Christian principle; and it is unvarnished to conclude that the expressions of remorse are any less authentic than the venomous invective.

A crucial issue here, which Frank points toward without engaging in his reference to Dostoevsky's "greatest characters," is the qualitative difference between the polemicist, diarist, and correspondent, on the one hand, and the novelist, on the other. Why, indeed, did Dostoevsky, whose "polyphonic" genius enabled him to create such convincing socialists, never invent a real Jew in his novels? Given his preoccupation with the Jewish question, one might almost have predicted that his fictional cast of potentially fascinating enemies of the truth would have included at least one Shylock - a Jew seen to be dangerous and abhorrent but also granted the emotional timbre and projective power of his own voice as a Jew. I think a valuable clue to this puzzle is provided by Goldstein's comments on the momentary appearance of the Jewish fireman in *Crime and Punishment* - perhaps the one

must be a final hallucination of Svidrigailov - something which actually would not make much thematic sense in a novel that exhibits a studied consistency in the hallucinations and nightmares assigned to the various characters. In any case, Goldstein's more important conclusion is that the Jewish phantom figure is ultimately Dostoevsky's hallucination - a hallucination which, I would suggest, forced its way past his inner censor to make a fleeting and inconspicuous appearance in the novel. Otherwise, one is hard put to explain the presence in the book of this bizarre witness whose pronounced ethnic identity at once violates historical verisimilitude and lacks any evident anchorage in the psychology or thematic profile of the character who is about to commit suicide. The odd Jewreck detail of the Achilles helmet is constructed by Goldstein, perhaps with a note of special pleading in his language, as a token that in Dostoevsky's imagination the Jew's "brow remains marked by the stamp of the eternal". What he goes on to say, however, is both persuasive and suggestive:

His ghostlike presence represents an eerie challenge to the Messianic role of the Russian people that Dostoevsky would like to preempt for them [sic]. Until this phantom could be exorcised for all times and ground into ethnographical dust, Dostoevsky would be assailed by tormenting doubts as to the legitimacy of the exclusive God-hearing

and *Punishment* - perhaps the one juncture in *Dostoevsky and the Jews* where the author abandons his caution, workday analysis of documents to make a leap of intuition. Frank suspects that Goldstein may have come down too heavily here on rather slender textual evidence, but the point, it seems to me, is that Goldstein's reading is not really an interpretation of the episode's "meaning" in the novel but rather a suggestion of how this curious scene might be a symptom of something in Dostoevsky's imagination, outside the novel.

In the novel, Svidrigailov, after his night of ghastly dreams and hallucinations in a sordid hotel room, sets out at dawn through the empty, fog-shrouded streets of St Petersburg, his pistol in pocket, with the intention of killing himself. By a watchtower he encounters a dour Jewish fireman wearing a copper "Achilles helmet". When the Jew asks him in a heavy Yiddish accent where he is going, Svidrigailov replies: "To foreign parts, to America. Then he draws the revolver and places it against his temple. The fireman, his pupils widening with horror, calls out: "No, not here, this is not *dze* place here!" and Svidrigailov proceeds to pull the trigger.

Now, in point of historical fact, as Goldstein properly observes, it would have been extremely improbable to find a Jewish fireman in St Petersburg in the middle of the nineteenth century. He concludes that the fireman

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vision and mission of the Russian people.

McMillan and counter-missionism are of course not the psychological key to all categories of anti-Semitism, but they are clearly a key to the anti-Semitism of a man like Dostoevsky, consumed as he was with the idea of his nation's becoming the redemptive force in history. He could hardly have been unaware that the messianic vision was the legacy of the Jewish people. It seems doubtful that he ever thought of the Jews consciously as a serious competitor for the messianic sceptre, but one can guess that the unconscious apprehension of such a notion was readily translated into conscious images of the Jews as an anti-messianic non-people – not an army of Christ but dark legions of the antichrist, not ready to redeem mankind with their blood but vampirically sucking the blood from mankind, impelled not by saving love but by destructive greed.

Though Freud may well be right concerning the wild oscillations of Dostoevsky's feelings about the Jews as about other things, the overwhelming force of these hostile images, so abundantly documented by David Goldstein, can scarcely be denied; and they are, as Goldstein's analysis suggests, precisely the images of a mind pursued by a phantom.

But why, to return to our initial question, was this constant phantom of Dostoevsky's later years granted admission to the novel only in one enigmatic page of *Crime and Punishment*? The answer, I think, requires invoking the blurry distinction between the man and the artist, though with an ambiguous connection that persists between life and art. Dostoevsky's peculiarly attained a grotesque in writing fiction that he patently did not possess in his private life and political activity. Obviously, he was able to achieve this

fictional figures with many of his own inner conflicts, hidden desires, hates and fears, but there were also certain vicious mental habits he permitted himself in his life which his intuition as a writer would not allow him to practice in his art. He could not write about a Jew, however fondly, in the gallery of his "greatest characters", because the Jew was a phantom for him, and as an imaginative writer he clearly knew when he was blurring an ideological polemicist, that phantoms are not real.

Late in *The House of the Dead*, the narrator, having caught himself dividing up the group of convicts into neat categories as he writes about them, makes the following observation, which could serve as an apt introduction to the poetics of characterization in Dostoevsky's novels:

Real life is infinite in its variety in comparison with even the dearest abstract generalisation, and it does not admit of sharp and sweeping distinctions. The tendency of real life is towards greater and greater differentiation. We, too, had a life of our own of a sort, and it was not a mere official existence, but a real inner life of our own.

Dostoevsky's supreme achievement as a novelist was his ability to translate this sense of absolute, terrible, strangely alluring individuality into fictional personages ranging from the sublime to the outrageously grotesque, drawn from different social backgrounds, embracing different ideologies, embodying an astonishing variety of temperaments. For the Jew, however, he could not attempt such a translation because to him the Jew was a phantom – the wavering image of an authorial Other which, unlike those dissimilar fragments of his intimate self from which he shaped his major char-

acters, could not be fleshed out with convincing individuality.

That phantom, transposed into public discourse and ideological terms, became an abstraction: not a human figure with a "real inner life of his own" but a manifestation of International Capital and International Socialism conspiring to undermine Christian society. The unbridgeable gap between such phantoms spun out of murky fantasies and real people encountered in the world is evident in the internal contradictions of Dostoevsky's letters to Jewish correspondents: in one breath he treats them with decency as individual human beings worthy of civilized consideration; and in the next, he goes on to defend his indefensible generalizations about the character of the people to whom they belong.

Admittedly, art provides no automatic immunity against the poisons of ideology that may be working within the artist, and the literary history of our own century offers some notorious instances of gifted writers whose novels or poems were variously tainted by one form or another of destructive ideology, usually to the artistic detriment of the work in question but perhaps not invariably so. Dostoevsky, however, is rather a special case. In the very years when his antisemitism became truly obsessive, he was creating *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. He was, in other words, a genius writing something like perfect pitch, for thousands of pages that still haunt the imaginations of countless readers. The hallmark of his art was a sustained absorption in the acutely differentiated inner lives of his characters, and in the practice of such an art, he could not permit himself to enjure with mere abstractions, ideological counters, elusive wraiths. The man, as David Goldstein demonstrates, often chose to wallow in mire, but the artist stood on higher, firmer ground.



Bertrand Russell aged four, in 1876. In that year he had already lost both parents and was sent to live with his grandparents, Lord and Lady Russell, at Pembroke Lodge, Richmond. The photograph is one of many illustrations in Ronald Clark's *Bertrand Russell and His World* (127pp. Thames and Hudson, £5.95, 0 500 1370 1). Also reproduced is a sketch of Russell aged two showing him in what his mother described as "Bernard's favourite attitude for study – book resting on feet".

Cross-channels

By Graham Hough

Critique
Février-Mars 1981: Victorla Stoltan
250pp. Paris: Minuit.

The French journal *Critique*, in a moment of relaxation, has devoted a special number to Victorian England. There is no very urgent pressure behind this survey, and those who expect from a Parisian source some searing reevaluation or shattering deconstruction will not find it. The tone is indulgent. "Nulle ambition, dans ce numéro exceptionnel, d'embrasser toutes les faces de l'ère victorienne". On se contenta de méditer sur ses principales aspects, sans se départir d'un peu d'humour. The meditation is not confined to literature; it extends to economics, sociology and political philosophy; most of the articles are built around reviews of books on Victorian topics, some English, some French academic theses. The results are not surprising. The English reader will find little that is unfamiliar and too much that ceased to be interesting a long time ago.

The best essay by far is Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's "Marxisme: made in England", a crisp and sparkling piece on Marx's English sources of inspiration: the contrast between his attitudes and those of the English radicals; the paradigmatic status of English capitalism and the English working class; and the powerful impulses received from Darwin and Carlyle. Lively, well-informed and jargon-free, this is a real contribution. Hervé Jouanjan's "L'Anglais, stélier du monde" is a compact and competent survey of the period of English industrial predominance; and a review-article by Jean-Louis Fabiani uses the Penguin reprint of Klingenberg's *Art and the Industrial Revolution* as a text for a carefully researched discussion of the presentation of industrial workers in Victorian art.

Among the literary articles the most agreeable is Jacques Roubaud's "La prose invisible d'Anthony Trollope". This is a pleasant and perceptive ramble through the Trollope country,

arranged under various heads – squares, houses, girls, lives, etc. – concluding with a disarming picture of the author reading his way daily through the Barchinensis novels in a small café in the place de Clichy, until the establishment finally closed around him. Jean-Paul Martin begins invitingly, on the ambiguities of Virginia Woolf's attitude to George Eliot, but the argument fizzles out before it has time to get started.

The rest of the literary articles – on Browning, Disraeli, Carlyle, Morris, etc. – are, it must be confessed, sadly commonplace. It is melancholy to see so distinguished a scholar as J.J. Mayoux reviewing at considerable length an enormous French thesis on Browning which does not consider it necessary to and to see him, furthermore, giving all quotations in extremely flat French translation, a process by which all traces of Browning as a poet are obliterated. Françoise Ducrocq gives a conventional wall over the sorrows of Victorian women; and Stephen Heath, the one English contributor, an equally conventional snigger over the popular Victorian voices – flagellation, little girls, and so forth.

This is not a distinguished collection – well below the intellectual standard of most numbers of *Critique*. A similar assemblage of English essays on French nineteenth-century literature would almost certainly be better. I think there is a reason for this. Anyone in England seriously concerned with literature will have a lively interest in some part of the French nineteenth century – in Balzac, Flaubert, Proust, Baudelaire or Mallarmé. There is no corresponding interest among French readers in English Victorian literature. It is read in the line of duty by those who are professionally engaged in teaching it to universities; and if the result is a dutiful *compte-rendu* rather than a real engagement we cannot be surprised. It is a missed opportunity all the same. Given the enormous and fascinating difference between English culture and French in the nineteenth century, a real critique of Victorian literature from the French point of view would be well worth having.

North-West of the North-West frontier

By M. E. Yapp

JOHN C. GRIFFITHS:

Afghanistan
Key to a Continent
225pp. André Deutsch, £7.95.
0 233 97350 8

NANCY PEABODY NEWELL and
RICHARD S. NEWELL:
The Struggle for Afghanistan
236pp. Cornell University Press, £9.
0 8014 1339 3

Those who comment on the political and strategic implications of current events have adopted a convention according to which, in the absence of good information, one uses bad information, and in the absence of any information at all one writes "background", a fertile compound of history and geography. The operation of this convention has been well illustrated in the case of Afghanistan. In the immediate aftermath of the April 1978 revolution newspapers were full of reflections on nineteenth-century Anglo-Afghan wars and overflowed with references to the Khyber Pass, the one point of Afghan geography, believed to be known to the man in the street. So fixed was this latter obsession that one unfortunate journalist in the Khyber Kabul Pass still thought himself to be a hundred miles away in the Khyber.

Matters have improved since those confused days: the Khyber Pass is now understood to be in Pakistan; and no such crude errors inhabit John Griffiths's book, which is primarily a competent résumé of Afghan history and a description of the country. On the period which he knows best – that of the constitutional monarchy and the Daud republic (1963-78) – Griffiths is indeed an illuminating guide. Essentially, however, this is still a book of background and the part which deals with the post-1978 period contains some rather factual errors (Nur Ahmad Nuri not Nur Muhammad Nuri) and some curious lapses of judgement, as in his assessment that Sayyid Ahmad Ghalani controls the most powerful of the Peshawar guerrilla groups. Indeed all of his statements that there are scarcely any members of the People's Democratic Party in the government of Babrak Karmal.

Time matches on and background gives way to bad information. Information about contemporary Afghanistan comes from three sources: statements by the Afghan government which are mainly propaganda; statements by Peshawar guerrilla groups which are mainly fantasy; and statements by assorted Asian and Western journalists, diplomats and travellers which are mainly gossip. It is poor stuff. Nancy Peabody Newell and Richard S. Newell have done a useful job in putting this information together and have laboured intelligently and perceptively to make sense of it, but content-plating the results of their work I was reminded of a statement (made many years ago) by the Kashmiri owner of a huseboat on the river Jhelum, who was busily decrying the attractions of the boats of his rivals on the Dal Lake. He observed that the drinking water used on the lake boats was drawn from the same area of water into which the waste pipes discharged their unattractive cargo. "Of course", he concluded, "it is boiled; but it is still flush."

Venturing into these unplumbed depths the fastidious historian experiences a natural unease and turns hopefully to the first question suggested by these books: is history of any value in understanding recent events in Afghanistan? Bahrak Karmal, who, at the time of writing, still stands at the head of affairs in Afghanistan, would answer "yes" for his invigorating speeches, delivered in his parties of Afghans led into his stronghold in Kabul, are rich in references to historical parallels. His testimony may be discounted, however, since his remarks refer to a mythical past which is just as much the product of an exuberant imagination as are his characterizations of present time. Little greater confidence is inspired by Griffiths's restriction of the ethnic character, an

explanatory device once believed of British officers on the North-West Frontier, who attempted to predict the behaviour of tribes on the basis of observed group personality traits. The system had three defects: observers could not agree on the group personality traits; individuals had an annoying habit of refusing to conform to them; and it was useless for predicting behaviour. Soviet soldiers, presently penetrating the Panjshir valley amid a hail of bullets, may equally reflect ruefully on Griffiths's "peaceful" Tajiks.

If the history of Afghanistan reveals anything it is that Afghanistan is a very shaky proposition. The state was created during the nineteenth century as a result of international pressures – the desire of Russia and Britain to draw frontiers which would prevent a collision involving themselves; and the domestic pressures of a succession of tough rulers who sought to establish some modest element of governmental authority over the peoples under their sway. And modest it certainly was: as Griffiths points out, the proportion of national revenue to gross national product in 1973 was, at seven per cent, about the lowest in the world. Only under President Daud in the period 1973 to 1978 was a sustained effort made to increase domestic revenue and thereby achieve a fundamental alteration in the relationship of state and society. It is in that effort that the first clue to understanding the 1978 revolution may be found.

Two explanations have been advanced for that revolution: one stresses external factors and the other internal factors. Griffiths inclines towards the first. The Soviet Union, he writes, was suddenly involved in the April 1978 coup, and he suggests two reasons for this: the historic desire for a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean; and a fear that Daud was trying to break free from Soviet influence. The argument is unconvincing. There is no good evidence that Soviet agents were involved in the coup, or that either Taraki or the Soviet Union has sought a base on the Indian Ocean; and no reason to believe that the USSR opposed Daud's attempts to pursue the Afghan revolution. Was Amin in a tradition of ruthless Afghan rulers in the tradition of the Amir Abd al-Karim, or an embryonic Tito, or just a thug? Certainly he was an Afghan nationalist; only that circumstance can explain the parts that his success has taken to try to pretend otherwise with his absurd stories that Amin was a CIA agent or that he planned to partition Afghanistan. But did Amin propose to dispense with Soviet assistance, or did he believe that the USSR had no alternatives but to support him, however much it might dislike his policies and believe that his radicalism threatened to jeopardize the revolution and en-

Pashun, used Dari (Afghan Persian) as their first language, and were more willing to compromise with other so-called progressive groups. The Khalajis tended to be Muslims from outside the traditional elite, and were less willing to compromise. They were also more strongly represented in the predominantly Pashun army officer corps.

Once in power the PDPA's divisions were enhanced by disagreements about policies. The PDPA was a tiny party of young urban radicals, mainly from Kabul, and had almost no support in the country. One possibility was to form a broad coalition with other groups and pursue a moderate policy. Another possibility, which came to be favoured by the Khalajis, was to try to destroy the power of their enemies and create a massive constituency of supporters by giving land to the peasants. As the Newells show, it was a policy based on complete ignorance of the agrarian situation in Afghanistan and its implementation without any adequate machinery. Far from creating supporters, it made them not enemies; the unfortunate recipients of the land found themselves threatened with death if they cultivated it and death if they did not. Small wonder that, to date, one in seven Afghans has left the country.

The main proponent of this radical policy was Halaizil Amin, who rose steadily within the party and government until he became dictator of Afghanistan from the overthrow of Taraki in September 1979 until the Soviet invasion in December of the same year. The life of the Amin regime was misty, brutish and short. Yet the nature of that regime remains one of the greatest puzzles so far produced by the Afghan revolution. Was Amin in a tradition of ruthless Afghan rulers in the tradition of the Amir Abd al-Karim, or an embryonic Tito, or just a thug? Certainly he was an Afghan nationalist; only that circumstance can explain the parts that his success has taken to try to pretend otherwise with his absurd stories that Amin was a CIA agent or that he planned to partition Afghanistan. But did Amin propose to dispense with Soviet assistance, or did he believe that the USSR had no alternatives but to support him, however much it might dislike his policies and believe that his radicalism threatened to jeopardize the revolution and en-

danger the security of the southern frontier of the Soviet Union? For the root of the disagreement between Amin and the Soviet Union was that once is that even those who recognize the true state of affairs still tend to concentrate their discourse on the factions in Peshawar and to select favourite candidates for leadership of the resistance from them. Among Western writers the most popular candidate is Sayyid Ahmad Ghalani, principally because he gives the impression of being the most moderate and Westernized of the faction leaders, although it is wholly obscure why it is thought that these qualities should recommend him in Afghanistan. Because of his uncompromising Muslim stance Ghalani in Hikmatyar receives short shrift from Western writers, although it is clear that he leads the largest faction and that which has most power in Afghanistan, albeit a power which is very limited.

Griffiths and the Newells offer different solutions to the problem of Afghanistan. Understandably distressed at the damage the civil war has caused, Griffiths suggests that it would be best to work for a negotiated settlement, rebel recognition of the Kabul regime, and possibly a Karmal-Ghalani coalition. This proposal would seem greatly to overstate the power of Karmal and Ghalani to command support. The Newells suggest that Western military help should be given to the rebels and a diplomatic effort made to solve the regional political problems, which make the supply of aid and concerted action against the Karmal government more difficult. But how could one ensure that the aid given reached the main groups of local fighters? And since the principal sources of opposition to the PDPA are local and essentially anti-government, how could a policy of distributing arms to such people ever yield the stable government in Afghanistan which is desired by all outside powers?

If, for the sake of argument, one supposed that what Western commentators appear to desire could be achieved, and that the Afghan resistance could be co-opted and forced into a single organization, would that make it stronger? One suspects that it would be weaker. In the sense that a single organization could be more easily destroyed than the present hybrid-headed opposition.

What of the future? Both Griffiths and the Newells agree that the key is the Afghan resistance. That resistance consists of two parts: a number of quarrelling factions in Peshawar who do most of the talking; and a host of local groups in Afghanistan who do

Chinese continuities

By Owen Lattimore

WITOLD RODZINSKI:

A History of China
Volume 1
469pp. Pergamon, £23.
0 11882 1816 7

One-volume histories of China are a dime a dozen, as they say, and some of them are good. Even in distinguished company, however, Witold Rodzinski's work stands out for its clarity and elegance, making it astonishing that, though published in 1979, it has attracted practically no attention from reviewers. To begin with, it has a most unusual pedigree. Born in Poland in 1918, the author was taken to America at the age of nine. His education was divided between the United States, Poland and Switzerland. He served in the American armed forces in the war. It was not until about 1948 that, bethinking himself of the land of his birth, he returned to Poland, where he was soon accepted but launched on a meteoric career. From 1960 to 1964 he was Polish Ambassador to the Court of St James and from 1966 to 1969 Ambassador to Peking. Since then he has been mainly occupied academically at the University of Warsaw, with intervals as Visiting Scholar at Columbia University (1975) and Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge (1976-77). He is thus a historian steeped in the languages and cultures

of two Marxist countries, Poland and China, and three capitalist societies, the United States, Great Britain and Switzerland.

This heritage shows in his book. It was in fact written in English and translated into Polish by the author himself. He has now put it back into English, with a certain amount of updating but without "any large-scale alterations or rewrites". The translation of the preface to the Polish edition shows that we have here a single work, offered to an international general readership – not two versions, one for Marxist and one for non-Marxist readers. In view of the increasing importance of understanding what Marxists mean by what they say (instead of merely rejecting Marxism because it is Marxism), and in the view of the diversity of Marxist theories (too much neglected when we consider what is written about China and a number of other countries), we are fortunate in having as a guide a broadly-based Marxist like Rodzinski, who has not a mixed field between Soviet Marxism, European Marxism and Chinese Marxism. While writing him luck, one can also have great confidence in his ability to do an outstanding job, for he is clearly a man whose main endeavour is to define "truth in history" on the basis of what we know today, while also pointing out areas in which much still remains to be investigated and assessed. He does not claim that he has grasped the "final" truth and he is not interested in lifting the scalps of rival interpreters of China's history.

A poet imported

By Arnold McMillan

YU. D. LEVIN:
Ossian v russkoy literature
Leningrad: Nnuka, 80 copecks.

Ossian, alias James Macpherson, belongs to the small number of imported English and Scottish writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries whose popularity on the Continent was at least as great as that which they enjoyed at home. In the case of Russia, to the names of Byron and Scott can be added that of Laurence Sterne, whose *Tissim Shandy* has exercised a peculiar fascination on Russians well into the present century; but perhaps broadest in appeal was the phenomenon of Ossian, which remained a vital influence in Russian literature for nearly half a century. Few eighteenth-century Russians would have gone as far as the young Goethe (Johann Werther) when he put Ossian higher than Homer, but in 1818 the poet Batiushkov thought about the Scottish bard "day and night", and the sentimental writer and critic Karantzin was probably reflecting in general conviction when he exclaimed, with wholly unconscious irony, "Yu are great, Ossian, great and inimitable".

Yury Levin's excellent monograph, *Ossian v russkoy literature*, comparing favourably with works like Tombo's *Ossian in Germany* (1902), Van Tieghem's *Ossian en France* (1917), and Munkit's *Ossian en Espagne* (1974), belongs to a long-established tradition of Russian comparative studies which during the past fifty years or so has flourished particularly in Leningrad, where outstanding works such as Zhirmovskiy's *Byron and Pushkin* (1924) and Goeche in *Russia* (1937), Shorygin's articles on the Scandinavian connection, and the present-day dozen Alekseyev's multifarious small-scale studies, have set a standard for Russian literary scholarship which has rarely been matched. It is, therefore, appropriate that *Ossian v russkoy literature* should be written by a protégé of Alekseyev and in the city with which Peter the Great sought to open a window on Europe.

Ossian first came to Russian attention through a translation of Werther in 1781, at a time when interest in writers

like Young and Thomson already reflected some dissatisfaction with the rigidity of French classicism and rationalism; but while opposition to French cultural hegemony was still a live issue half a century later, Ossian was by then becoming less the object of veneration and imitation than of ironic parody, as in Pushkin's first major poem, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1820).

As so often, before and since, eighteenth-century Russians usually became acquainted with literature in English through the intermediary of French or German, and Karantzin was rare amongst early translators of Ossian in that he worked directly from the original rather than from the immensely influential but loose and periphrastic versions of Lermontov. The most popular of Ossian's works in Russia were undoubtedly the *Songs of Selma* and *Carthage*, and the most important, though not the most accurate, translation was by Kestrov, whose collection of 1792 was a landmark in the Russian cult of this poet.

In addition to the more or less faithful translations, something of Ossian was reflected in the original work of the great majority of Russian writers between 1788 and 1833; some, like Pushkin, Vencviniyov and Lermontov, only fleetingly in juvenilia, others more extensively and in their mature writing, echoing the aspects of Ossianism which coincided with their own ideas. Sentimentalists such as Karantzin and Luter, Zhukovsky, for example, excluded virtually all epic, martial and heroic elements from the poems' heroic, patriotic side. Chernov's vastly popular tragedy *Phigal* (1805) dressed the Celtic subject in essentially classical form, but many monologues from the play served as models for a whole series of romantic verse imitations. Such contrasts and vagaries characterize the whole picture of Ossian in Russia. During the Napoleonic wars, for example, the melancholy strain of Ossian's poems mixed in popularity with Russian military fortunes waned, but receded into insignificance with the rout of the French, when patriotic odes in the style of Lomonosov and Derzhavin gained sway.

In particularly interesting chapter Dr Levin deals with the ways in which Celtic myth became russified through links and parallels with Russian folk poetry: an indirect consequence of this

process was the stimulus which Ossian gave to the rediscovery of the Russian folk heritage and the development of an individual Russian national consciousness, preceding Scott as an influence on historical tales and novels. There is a degree of piquancy in the veneration and imitation that of ironic parody, as in Pushkin's first major poem, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1820).

The *Lay of Igor's Campaign*, a copy of which was discovered in 1905. Undoubtedly some of the interest and much of the controversy which surrounded the appearance of this remarkable work, now believed by most scholars to be genuine, was fuelled by growing doubts about Macpherson's "discoveries", though until the second decade of the nineteenth century the majority of Russians still believed in the poems' authenticity.

By 1820 there were few, if any, beliefs, and in the second half of the 1820s Ossianic themes were confined to the work of second-rate epigones; indeed, some former enthusiasts like Katenin became the harshest critics. The only exception to a general picture of decline was the poet and critic Kyukhchev, who as late as 1820 could still proclaim Ossian the equal of Homer, Aeschylus and Juvenal, and in 1835 wrote an entirely unironic poem *Ossian*. In the latter work Dr Levin sees not only memories of Ossian, but linked to them memories of the rebellious moods of Decembrist ten years earlier, and it is on this "positive" note that he ends his survey of a major episode in Russian literary history.

The author wears his scholarship lightly, and the tale of Ossian in Russian literature is told in an elegant, lively style. With an index of names, comprehensive annotation, and first-class bibliography, it is also an excellent reference work, and makes a most welcome addition to Russian cross-cultural studies.

A *Karamazov Companion* by Victor Teres (462pp. University of Wisconsin Press, 299 0814 4) aims to provide the reader with information needed for a sophisticated reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The introduction deals with its genesis, philosophy and structure, while detailed commentary outlines the social and political background to the novel, identifies quotations and allusions in the text and discusses Dostoevsky's literary style.

commentary

Tidy explanations

By Richard Combs

From the Life of the Marlonnettes
Academy Cinema 2

About the time of *The Silence of Persepolis*, it seemed that on the subject of angst, anomic, alienation and general disgust with human life, nobody could cut it like Ingmar Bergman. But the cinema has dabbled a lot in those areas since then, and even an unintelligent, thick-skulled thriller like *The First Deadly Sin* now touches incidentally on such modern evils. It also bandwagons the religious symbolism that once seemed a definitely original part of Bergman's moral language. None of which, to be sure, should diminish the interest of Bergman. But in the case of *From the Life of the Marlonnettes* does leave him rather high and dry. High in the sense that the analytical, almost clinical context disengages audience emotion; the torments of his characters come tumbling forth, with none of the usual dramatic structuring and tidying. Dry in the sense that this parade of faces and voices, each given its turn at confession and self-examination, seems to have us captive in a consulting room.

There is drama here, of course, in story, characterization and even explanations. The film begins with a murder. Peter Bergman, a young, successful businessman, has been introduced to a prostitute who happens to have the same name as his wife, Katarina. She appears to be comforting him when he abruptly turns on her, pursues her relentlessly through the claustrophobic warren beneath a strip club and finally does her to death off-screen. The scene is suffused with a lurid red glow, turning the location into Hell, predictably enough, but also into some kind of basic human foundry (Peter ironically refers to himself at one point as "a pulp of blood and nerves"). What follows, in retrospectively chilling monochrome, is a series of revelations about Peter, his family, friends and associates, all dated in relation to the "catastrophe".

Peter talks to his psychiatrist at his secret sense of horror, rooted in a dream of killing his wife. He also talks to Katarina in the wake of freedom he feels in his life, and of the enigma which he is too emulated to describe to her. She in turn confesses to having been

ambushed by a doubting mind when she least expected it, while her fashion business partner, a homosexual, experiences his own dissolution every time he looks in a mirror. The psychiatrist finally has an explanation for Peter's breakdown. The son of a weak father and a strong-willed theatrical mother, he had been unable to accept or express his secret homosexual inclinations. The society in which he moved offered him no release, only an anaesthetizing round of drink, drugs and parties. When he slipped into another milieu, however, that of the prostitute, the release occurred in a lethal explosion.

As we are not led to put too much faith in the moral authority of the psychiatrist (he has been trying to have an affair with Peter's wife), Bergman probably doesn't believe that his professional judgement suits the film. The trouble is that this cut and dried framework is not even a helpful context for the scenes in which characters grope obscurely after more nameless truths. Similarly, such unacknowledged, unacknowledged, the homosexual's unacknowledged confession that he was trying to get Peter away from his wife - are over-revealed and perfunctory. They set the stage for the monologues, but Bergman doesn't intend that they should be of interest to himself.

It is probably not intended, in fact, that anything in *From the Life of the Marlonnettes* should seem as real as the anguish confided to its face to face by the characters. In all other respects, the film partakes of the symbolical, from the title and the glossy décor (interiors of chrome and "natural" woods that look crisp from the factory, off-screen. The scene is suffused with a lurid red glow, turning the location into Hell, predictably enough, but also into some kind of basic human foundry (Peter ironically refers to himself at one point as "a pulp of blood and nerves"). What follows, in retrospectively chilling monochrome, is a series of revelations about Peter, his family, friends and associates, all dated in relation to the "catastrophe".

Far reaches

By Richard Osborne

Vladimir Ashkenazy
Royal Festival Hall

Ashkenazy's performance of Beethoven's last two piano sonatas in his recital on June 24 was a provoking experience. To have the most figured climax of Op. 110, the musical equivalent of Goethe's "Upward Fall", so rudely contradicted by the savage diminished harmonies of the start of Op. 111 was a salutary experience.

Op. 110 presents its own special problems, of course. The late Eric Blom once devoted valuable column inches looking for the "second subject" of the sonata's first movement - as vain an undertaking as seeking out the plot of Beethoven's "Eolian Harp". In late Beethoven, as in the Conversation Poems of Coleridge, the movement is the movement of the reflecting mind. To treat of "subjects" in music which is preoccupied, above all, with growth, transition and transformation may be musicology but it is hardly good sense.

In this performance, Ashkenazy treated Beethoven's moments of spiritual crisis, his points of rapt reflection, with characteristically spellbinding withdrawals of tone. It was a generous reading too. For Ashkenazy, as for Schnabel before him, the word music implies a quiet-pulsing energy. He continues to misjudge the

Arisso's preceding recitative, playing it too slowly for the ear to travel from note to note; and the Scherzo seemed to lack pace and thrust ("Do not miss the music's fierce, plebeian voice", enjoined the aristocratic Cortot); but these were minor flaws.

Ashkenazy favours a quickening at the second variation, an intimation of joy in a reading which sees the entire movement as poised between serenity and joy. Op. 111 was vividly articulated, superbly "registered" - the keyboard's furthest reaches. The Arietta was played *molto semplice* rather than *molto adagio*, every note a slender pillar of tone on which the structure is later to rest.

After the interval, Chopin, and a willful of theatre. To challenge the Beethoven at all adequately, the 19 minor Sonata needed to stand alone. As it was, the two Op. 27 Nocturnes, the one gaunt, the other more in D flat major, exquisitely realized by him. They tended to pre-empt the Sonata's opening pages, to which Ashkenazy gave a somewhat diffused feel: Chopin would surely have played this movement *maestoso*, with a tautened rhythm. One missed too, the Scherzo's fleeting, visionary mood in spite of a genuinely quick tempo. There was, nonetheless, a dash to fire the imagination, not least the finale's harlequinade. Here, as in the Beethoven, he warmed to the music's serious purpose and facile splendour.

After impressions

By David Alexander

Mezzotints by David Lucas
Fitzwilliam Museum, CambridgeWallerant Vaillant
Christopher Mendez Gallery, 51 Lexington St., London W1

In the early 1830s, John Constable began to issue a series of small mezzotint plates of landscape views in an attempt to increase public interest in English rural scenery. These prints generally less than five by nine inches managed to convey as few other engravings do the changes of season and weather. Their success was due in part to Constable's use of a young engraver, David Lucas, the centenary of whose death is marked by the current exhibition at the Fitzwilliam (until July 31). But they also owed much to Constable's involvement in their production. The Fitzwilliam exhibition shows many of the progress proofs on which artist and engraver worked, and gives the visitor an idea of the closeness and intensity of their collaboration. The importance of these prints is now appreciated, and they are all reproduced in Andrew Wilton's recently published *Constable's 'English Landscape Scenery'* which puts the prints, so long of interest only to collectors, in their wider art-historical background.

The name of Lucas is so linked to Constable that it is generally forgotten that he had an independent reputation in his day. The exhibition rightly includes examples of his work after other artists: his prints after Edward Price's Norwegian views in particular bring home the fact that Lucas's skill as a landscape engraver did not depend on having Constable at his shoulder. But it seems that the engraver's devotion to the unfashionable Constable made it difficult for him to make a new career after the latter's death. Long before Lucas died in a Fulham workhouse, he had sunk into obscurity, and we can only guess from his youthful work after Constable what he might have produced had another landscape painter appreciated his gifts.

One reason why Lucas's prints after Constable were not a commercial success is that the public did not expect mezzotints to be used to show cloud and sunshine. It was a technique used to reproduce faces and fabrics. One of the first to exploit the medium was the Lille-born portrait painter Wallerant Vaillant. Vaillant assisted that pioneer of the art, Prince Rupert; he settled in Amsterdam and can be counted the first professional mezzotint engraver. Although he engraved over 200 plates, his prints are not easily found; Christopher Mendez has therefore been congratulated on having assembled a group of nearly thirty, together with two mezzotints by his brothers and "The Drawing Academy" attributed to Vaillant but of uncertain authorship.

The rarity of Vaillant's prints is one reason why his work is relatively unknown. Because F.W.H. Hollstein's illustrated catalogue *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, c. 1450-1700* is treating engravers in alphabetical order Vaillant's work has yet to be published there, and some



"Two singing youths", a 1675 mezzotint by Vaillant after Frans Hals, from the exhibition reviewed here

of the prints illustrated in Christopher Mendez's catalogue have probably never been reproduced before. These prints, though they vary in quality of impression, make a brilliant effect, and one can wonder why the technique, with its subtle differentiation of textures, caught on so quickly in Holland and England. Most of the prints in the exhibition are reproduced, notably after Dutch genre; in fact Vaillant's best prints are after his own paintings, and it is a pity that Mendez cannot show any of the self-portraits and has only a couple of their studies of Vaillant's family and circle, which include some of the masterpieces of child portraiture.

Lovely names

By T.J. Binyon

For Your Eyes Only
Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square

It might be tempting to explain the discontinuities of this film by the ineptness of the screenwriters. Since no Ian Fleming novel is unfilled, they have had to patchwork together - unsuccessfully, it might be thought - a number of short stories. But this explanation ignores the evidence of the pre-title sequence - in which an earlier enemy gets Bond a switch-back ride to certain death in a radio-controlled helicopter: an event totally and abjectly unconnected with anything that is to follow.

That is, instead of haplessly falling prey to discontinuity, the screenwriters have consciously sought it out. Their aim, skillfully achieved, has been to produce a kind of kinetic mosaic: a series of chases and fights arranged in a

purely eleatory order - there is very rarely a logical, narrative reason why one should precede or succeed another.

Each individual chunk of pattern, examined closely, reveals itself as an extended vermouth advertisement. Each is set in tourist land (Spanish villa, Italian resorts, Greek island), each involves furious action (car chase, ski run, mountain climb) and ends, after mock or real violence, with a punch-line from 007. At this point the mind's eye involuntarily conjures a number of short stories. But this explanation ignores the evidence of the pre-title sequence - in which an earlier enemy gets Bond a switch-back ride to certain death in a radio-controlled helicopter: an event totally and abjectly unconnected with anything that is to follow.

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Early in the film we glimpse for a moment a gaggle of bearded, grooped picturesquely round a Spanish swimming pool. Their names deserve to be recorded, not so much for dramatic achievement, as for the way in which they allow the cast list to end in something approaching a poem. They are: Lalla Dean, Evelyn Drogue, Laoura Hadzivadeli, Koko, Chai Lee, Kim Mills, Tula, Vanyu, Viva, Lizzie Worville and Alison Worth. One would have liked to see more of them, but even so this is as painless a way of growing 127 minutes older as one is likely to find.

Rational grotesque

By Keith Walker

No Country for Old Men
BBC TV

Swift's last years weren't pretty. His cousin Martha Whiteway wrote, "He walked in the house ten hours a day... his meat was served up ready cut, and sometimes it would lie an hour before he would touch it, and then eat it walking. The torture he was in is not to be described." Just before he died he arrogated St Paul's triumphant "I am what I am" to his own purposes. What was he?

One of the theories lurking behind BBC2's *No Country for Old Men: The Long Exile of Jonathan Swift* (June 28) is that he was a man trying to maintain the dictates of reason in a world seething with vice and folly, and that the strain finally almost broke his mind. Tristram Powell's film, with an allusive and musically literate script by David Nokes drawn from Swift's writings and from early biographies, doesn't quite say what is probably not true, that Swift went mad, but it toys with the idea. It's a gripping and sometimes persuasive fantasy in the grotesque. Greedy landowners slurp and guzzle at the disembodied bodies of young children. Bizarrely made-up courtiers are seen in distorting mirrors. Big people and little people are evoked by oblique camera shots. Rain, mud, and dogs wandering through kitchens, equal Ireland. So a more or less close-up of a horse shuffling, a sight usually seen in family viewing hours only during the Trooping of the Colour, has a reassuring normality about it. Anachronistic Hogarth etchings contribute to the general squalor. The occasional reminiscence of Vermeer in a servant girl holding a dish, a head reflected in a mirror) adds to the remarkable beauty of parts of the film while confusing the general effect.

Garrulous and good-hearted Tom Sheridan, played by Cyril Cusack, narrates and acts in the story (such as it is): the dramatized parts concerning Sheridan and Swift are laboured and mercifully brief. Since Sheridan died some seven years before Swift, this film about Swift's last years can't afford to be too nice about chronology (*was* Handel ever performed at the court of Queen Anne?). The perspective is from Swift's seventeenth birthday, for which, as it happens, Sheridan was available. Swift (an impressively grumpy Trevor Howard) is seen walk-

ing, talking, eating, sleeping, giving alms, sermonizing, riding, washing (with somewhat less than "oriental scrupulousity") and remembering: remembering his days of preparation at Moor Park where he tutored the young Stella, his years of triumph in London where he wrote to Stella and flirted with Vanessa, and remembering, too, his works, especially *Gulliver*.

As everyone (except some experts on Swift) knows, Gulliver often stands for Swift. Despairing of catching the obliquities and opportunism of *Gulliver's Travels*, Nokes and Powell ride the identification hard. *Gulliver's Travels* assumes the character of a child's nightmare of disproportions, lacking the comedy that Swift and Rabelais found in the game of big people and little people and the relatively unfrustrating aspect of the etchings to the 1727 French translation, etchings that Powell elsewhere uses. Once, hilariously, the drawn and emaciated faces of the actors who elsewhere play the starving populace of Dublin (all eighteen of them) figure for a moment the menace of the inhabitants of Brubbinggub. The female yahoos show that Swift was not mucked up about women. If you're going to dramatize *Gulliver's Travels* at all, probably hold simplifications like these are necessary. And you can have Swift wandering about as Gulliver-as-hypochondriac, or Swift in a bedlam out of a *Fad of a Job* and Hogarth, peopled with Struldbruggs - it will contribute to the delicious complexity of effect, if not to an understanding of *Gulliver's Travels*.

There's a striking visual (but not verbal) evasion during the dramatization of "The Lady's Dressing Room". Moreover, the capers of the actor bear no relation to the narrator's hurried dawning awareness that "Celia shifts". Sheridan merely plays a tragic man who's left his passport in a hotel bedroom. This justicist sermon (made up from Swift's real sermons, with something added from outside) rings false. But generally this remarkable film prints an unflinching if impressionistic portrait.

Swift haunted Yeats (another member of the protestant Anglo-Irish dominance), and so was some appropriate names in the title. But Yeats also had something specific in mind, which doesn't seem quite right for the Dean of St Patrick's - or couldn't it be Swift's "drinking coffee" with Vanessa was held to be a code. Anyway Swift held the view that Ireland was "no place" long before he came to be old.

Collision course

By Nicholas Shakespeare

London Calling
Square Thio Studio, Stratford E15

Sharing its title with both a song by The Clash and the World Service's bulletin, London Calling is Tony Marchant's second play at Stratford East's sweltering Studio Theatre: at twenty-one he is already part of a tradition that goes back to Barrie Keefe's trilogy, *Gimme Shelter*. Having stolen a briefcase and mugged a policeman, two teenagers, Paul and Saff, scramble into a corrugated yard in the midsummer sun. The action is determined by alternating guilt and day-dreams, prompted by travel brochures found in the briefcase.

Paul and Saff sit at either end of this see-saw. Janice Freeman's Paul is a heavyweight performance: his appearance in television's *Crime and Punishment* has served him well in the ways of guilt. Blinking in the light of what he has done, as well as of why he did it, he veers from rambling recollections of a day-trip to Fulkstone and time spent closeted with The Clash, to anguished, if sometimes tenuous, ruminations against the police and the environment he has helped destroy.

In trying to compensate for the bare

commentary

Egotistical ridiculous

By Andrew Motion

John Keats
BBC TV

The popular image of a poet derives largely from the Romantics. This century, various bank clerks, school-leavers and librarians have tried to establish an alternative, but their shows of ordinariness have tended to be either disregarded or greeted with amused surprise. What is expected and acceptable, it seems, is spectacular torment.

Nick McCarthy's two-part television portrait of Keats showed distress in abundance - with good reason: Keats's career was remarkably intense and agonized. But it was also capable, like all lives, of being humdrum too, and by ignoring this McCarthy failed to provide much sign of spontaneous and familiar humanity. His Keats moped and raved in a prolonged melodramatic passion often not far removed from the silliness of the *Radio Times* blurb, which described the poetic impulse as "a power more devastating than a clenched fist, more piercing than a surgeon's knife".

The result was enthralling, though not in the engaging way that Keats's poems often are. All their blustery intensity was disguised, partly by ham delivery and partly by the script's literalism. At one point Keats's fond thoughts of Fanny Brawne were accompanied by a shot in which she seemed to be standing behind net curtains, up to her waist in consummation. At others, poems were clumsily reduced to their likely original motivations. Perhaps Cowden Clarke really did welcome Keats one evening saying

"I've got something to show you" and handing him Chapman's *Platonia*, but in McCarthy's film the scene looked like a spoof - Cowden Clarke knowingly modest and Keats suddenly rigid and perturbed.

The unintentional comedy of such moments was accentuated by their awkward interweaving of McCarthy's and Keats's own words. Although passages from the letters were given the same treatment as the poems, and their intimacy as well as their brilliant, tumbling impetuosity was compromised, they at least had the dignity of authenticity. McCarthy's interpolations were always justified by facts, but were nevertheless inadequate. For Keats himself McCarthy's evident worry about this possibility led him to produce lines which were self-evidently suppressed themselves into telegraphese. Hence the stuttering, elliptical response to the horrors of doctoring: "That woman. Screaming to God to save her. No answers. Just a dead baby. Another dead baby." For the minor characters, McCarthy functioned as a caricaturist: Shelley was thin and argumentative, Leigh Hunt hum-drumming and enthusiastic.

In spite of their brevity, these character sketches succeeded each other at a disturbingly slow rate, mainly because their appearance was punctuated by long moody studies of Gerald Murphy looking like Keats in turmoil. The most serious consequence was that Keats's great poems - which were written in a notoriously short time - did not receive their due. A snatch of "The Eve of St. Agnes", bits of the Odes and quips from reviews were read to him on his Hampstead sick-bed - so lugger-mugger, and with such little attention to likely circumstances, that what should have been the film's heart never stirred heating.

Freerange drama

By Timothy McFarland

Ella
ICA Theatre

Seven of the nine performers in Herbert Achternbusch's *Ella* are live hens, scratching and pecking away behind the screens of wire-mesh that transform the stage of the ICA Theatre into a chicken-house. Competing for our attention with this scene-stealing supporting cast and shoring their squalid prison are Ella and her son Josef. Ella sits watching television with headphones on, painting her finger-nails in silence, while Josef, clad in a dress and apron, assumes her identity, acts the role of her mother and struggles with the coffee-grinder at the kitchen table. He also gives us, in a ninety-minute monologue, Ella's reminiscences of a lifetime of utter deprivation and brutal subjection. She has been beaten silly by her father, married off disastrously, shut up in series of prisons and mental hospitals, tormented by evil nurses and nuns, packed off to Bad Wiessee by the SS and infected with syphilis by American soldiers.

With the help of a map to support Josef-Ella's flagging memory, all the stages of this life are precisely located in Bavaria. Achternbusch's original text (1973) is written in Bavarian dialect too, or rather in something based on it - an idiom stretched, broken and battered to the point of a protesting but scarcely articulate helplessness, so that Ella is as firmly imprisoned within her language as she is in the psychiatric prison or in the cage-set of the theatre. This use of dialect to demonstrate socially conditioned forms of deprivation links Achternbusch with his Bavarian contemporaries Kroetz, Sperr and Fassbinder, and with the pre-war socialist dramatist Marieluise Fleisser. Even in the work of the classic Bavarian author Ludwig Thoma, the rural-idyllic element is balanced by a sharpened social awareness inherent in the demotic

Idiom. In the new writers this element has been enlarged into a savage parody of *Urbauernot* in which peasant folk and farmyard chickens alike have been unnaturally domesticated and put behind wire-netting.

Ella's appalling history is inserted, it is said, on the experiences of the author's aunt. Achternbusch first published this monologue in one of the collections of short stories, scenarios and diary-entries which he calls his novels. In these and in his films he rages with growing intensity against the dehumanizing social bigotry and brutality which he perceives in his native province. Given this degree of specific linguistic and social reference, one might ask how translatable the work is; but in fact a very considerable distancing effect had already been achieved through the role-switch of mother and son, and the "real" hen-house, both elements introduced by the author for the theatre version in 1978.

In the ICA production, the straightforward English text (by Estelle Schmid and Gavin Muir) merely adds one more distancing element. Bill Paterson's Josef breaks through all these barriers in a performance of great energy and conviction, with the help of a Scottish accent which is, he disarmingly assures us, a pretty good equivalent for Bavarian. It is a richly varied, inventive tour-de-force and it entertains us in a rather more friendly manner than can really be intended by Achternbusch's desolate recital. This lightning of the texture of the piece is consistent throughout Tim Albery's production, and it undoubtedly renders the horror and the anger more palatable when they burst through. Ella herself, the mute victim and end-product of the narrative history, is established as a strong presence by Janet Henfrey; perhaps less defeated and crushed than she might be. Nor do the sleek and contented hens do much to support the dire moral of the tale as they cluck happily about the set. They are certainly not the battered victims of a "battering society"; they do credit to Islington Free Farm.

New Oxford Books: Literature

The Oxford Book of Short Stories

Chosen by V.S. Pritchett

V.S. Pritchett, one of the most distinguished of contemporary short-story writers, has chosen some forty stories written in English from the early nineteenth century to the present day, which to his eye and in their time have been among the most original examples of a changing art. The collection bears witness to the talent of the past, and to the talent that continues to flourish. A sumptuous harvest in one hand, *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* ranges from Scott to Updike with no noticeable omissions and V.S. Pritchett's lucid introduction. *The Guardian*. £9.50

Anne Thackeray Ritchie

Winifred Gérin

The life of Anne Ritchie (1837-1919) linked the worlds of her father Thackeray and her niece Virginia Woolf. Winifred Gérin's biography throws new light on Thackeray as a family man; her portrait of him belies the hackneyed picture of him as a cynic and a snob. Anne Ritchie herself became a woman of letters, an admired novelist in the 1860s and 1870s, and a superb writer of memoirs. Illustrated £12.50

The Diary of a Country Parson

James Woodford
Edited by John Beresford

James Woodford's *Diary* has been a landmark since its first publication: it is a unique document of social history and a classic of personal writing. This is a reprint of John Beresford's comprehensive five-volume edition, first published in the 1920s and out of print since 1973. Illustrated £15

Hebridean Folksongs

III. Waulking Songs from Vatersay, Barra, Eriskay, South Uist, and Benbecula
Edited by J.L. Campbell and Francis Collinson

This is the third and final volume in what the Glasgow Herald called "a work of first importance in the collection and preservation of the oral literature of Scottish Gaelic". It contains forty-seven more waulking songs recorded between 1938 and 1965. Olfen sung to stonage or a harp and interlarded with evocative of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Highlands and Islands, these songs are one of the most interesting folk survivals of Western Europe. £25 16 July

John Bunyan: Miscellaneous Works

Volume IX: A Treatise of the Fear of God, The Greatness of the Soul, A Holy Life
Edited by Richard L. Greaves

£35 Oxford English Texts 16 July

Oxford University Press

commentary

Crime Writers' Conference Jorrock on a publisher's jaunt

By Julian Symons

So who wrote the best short story in the world? Or at least, the story chosen by American, English and Scandinavian judges as the best of the 500-odd stories with a criminal theme submitted to celebrate the third Crime Writers' International Congress in Stockholm? The prizes were handsome: a Saab turbo car, a free holiday plus \$1000 spending money, several prizes of \$500.

All the stories were submitted pseudonymously. The Saab was won by a part-time American writer named Frank Sisk who does much of his work in hotel rooms, the SAS holiday went to the almost equally little-known Dwight Steward, a teacher at Delaware State College. Third prize was won by Tony Hillerman, whose stories with a Navajo investigator have made him a star in the US than in Britain; and minor prizes were awarded to Michael Gilbert and Francis King among others. Christina Brand, J. R. F. Keating and I were among the also-rans.

What do crime writers talk about when gathered together? Very much what you might expect, really. Funnels discussed Sherlock Holmes, forgery, fingerprints and how to fake them, the generally dismal plight of the crime short story (gifts from Saab and SAS excepted), and more general matters like how near to realism the crime story does and should get. There were parties every night, succeeded by hard drinking in smoke-filled rooms, discussion of decreasing royalty rates and declining sales. The English delegation was strong - Desmond Bagley, Christina Brand, Colin Dexter, J. R. F. Keating, Peter Lovesey, Anthony Price, Ruth Rendell and others - the American one rather less representative, although it was dignified by the presence of Fred Dannay, the surviving half of "Ellery Queen". Several writers cried "Recession" and stayed at their typewriters, others no doubt dislike the inevitable meanness of congresses. The Swedes were exuberant and generous hosts.

CWIC 2 was held in London in 1975. CWIC 3 was held in New York three years later. CWIC 3 was attended by delegates from more countries than the others, and some of them raised important although not easily solvable problems of communication. At one session, crime writers from the Soviet Union, Japan and India assured us of the crime story's popularity in their countries, but how do those who read only English know what they're like? Julian Semjonov from the USSR has had one

police procedural story published here (*Pravda* 38), but what are his other books like? Semjonov, a genial back-slapper, said that he chose for hero the ordinary man, the good citizen and police officer, not caricatures like Hercule Poirot or Lord Peter Wimsey. But who were the villains, were they dissidents, anti-social elements? A roat of laughter, a slap on the back. "A simple question, you may think, but difficult to answer."

Abdul Hanneel, a police inspector from Kerala, has written ten crime stories, and was enthusiastic about the co-operative movement that published and distributed them. Since a royalty of 35% goes to the author, the enthusiasm was not surprising, but it was impossible to find out what these stories written in Malayalam are really like. The Japanese crime story, however, obviously demands attention in Britain and the US. Seicho Matsumoto, a name mentioned by every Japanese as a master of the crime story, sells 400,000 copies of any book he publishes. Unfortunately the only example of his work known here has been rendered into an English so atrocious as to be almost unintelligible. Matsumoto was not at the Congress, but Shizuko Natsuki, herself a prolific writer, told us that the Japanese crime story has moved into "the era of social crime fiction, setting it apart from pure detective stories", although these, too, are still popular. Does a Japanese Highsmith exist? Perhaps. We need some decent translations.

They are needed also for the Swedish crime story. At all three Congresses the Scandinavians have been present in force, and here they made an effort to draw attention to the flowering of the Swedish crime story in recent years, issuing an excellent brief history by Bo Lundin translated into easy, colloquial English. Reading Lundin's pamphlet one can have no doubt that there are good and lively crime writers in Sweden. Sjöwall and Wahlöö, the most celebrated Swedish crime writers, and according to Lundin by a long way the best, were helped by the passionate advocacy of an American publisher's reader.

Yet the hard basic truth is that the writer in a minority language - Swedish, Danish, Dutch - has a need to explain references in a way that may be damaging to the effects at which he aims. This applies especially to the police procedural story, which is most effective when told with every local crisscross, rather than with every local reference explained. These were among the problems talked about, not least by Swedes themselves, during and after parties.

By Humphrey Carpenter

JAN READ and MAITE MANJIN:
The Great British Breakfast
128pp. Michael Joseph, £7.50.
H 7181 2014 3

On a clear morning at about mid-summer, our friend Mr Jorrock was at the Euston station of the Birmingham railway, with the intention of setting out for a little hunting in one of the midland counties, when he should be observing upon the platform but Mr Spongy's "Jorrock's" exclaimed that much-travelled person, "Just the very man! Fancy a good breakfast?"

As it happened, our hero had partaken only very lightly that morning. "Breakfast, Spongy?" he exclaimed. "A werry good nothin'!"

"Then," exclaimed Spongy, indicating one of the newest species of express-trains, "step aboard! For in this very conveyance, my good friend Mr Michael Joseph the publisher is about to entertain in most lavish fashion, in celebration of the issuing of the public of a volume entitled *The Great British Breakfast*!"

"Didn't know books was in your line, Spongy, my dear old cove," exclaimed Mr Jorrock.

"This one is," came the sprightly answer, Spongy the meanwhile holding aloft a copy of the said book. "Why, look here's Chapter Three - entitled 'In Mr Surtree's Country' - and here's the very breakfast of yours in your own house: do you recall?"

They took their seats in the portion of the vehicle reserved for the friends of Mr Michael Joseph. Their host was not himself in evidence, but was represented by a charming young lady who, though somewhat disconcerted by the arrival of Messrs Jorrock and Spongy, quickly made them welcome, under the impression that they were the representatives of one of the sporting journals.

"Now, my dear fellow," observed Spongy, eyeing with enthusiasm the profusion of implements and drinking-vessels upon the snowy cloth, "I need scarcely enjoin you to make a good breakfast; but, should you require encouragement, I observe on page 118 of this excellent volume that ... proteins both stimulate the metabolism, and when eaten with carbohydrates and fat, result in a more gradual and much longer-lasting absorption of nutritive by the blood and tissues. The conclusion is that the traditional breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade and milky coffee or tea produces outstanding results, ensuring a high level of efficiency."

"You and I could've told 'em that," remarked Jorrock with a wink. "But 'oo says bacon and eggs is traditional? Why, I know for a fact that the Saxons broke their fast with cold pork, dark bread, and ale."

"While in the Middle Ages," rejoined Spongy, turning to page 16, "the rich ate boiled beef, mutton and pickled herring, washed down with ale and wine."

"That's the stuff!" cried Jorrock, as the whistle blew and the train began its journey northwards from the metropolis. "But 'oo's to be a good huntin' breakfast? Why, I recall ..."

"So do I," murmured Mr Spongy, his eyes missing over. "Cold roast pheasant or game pie - roast chicken - turkey - a good Cheddar cheese - plenty of ale ..."

A discreet cough sounded at his elbow. "Are you ready to order, gentlemen?" inquired a red-coated lackey.

"Oh," murmured Jorrock cheerlessly, "the usual sort of thing, you know. A devilled bone or two, some omelettes and a Cumberland ham, a dozen Oxford sausages, grilled kidneys, half a dozen muffs, and maybe a little cold goose."

In answer, the waiter spread before our heroes' eyes a document encased in a translucent frame.

"This is the *Age of the Train*," Spongy read out intently. "Please order from our *Grill Tray*: choice of fruit juice or grapefruit segments, followed by bacon, egg and sausage, powdered haddock 25p extra. Dejectedly he turned to his companion, "My dear Jorrock," he exclaimed sorrowfully, "I appear to have misled you. Not even the influence of Mr Michael Joseph has persuaded these d—d railway cooks to exert themselves beyond the ordinary."

"Never mind, my friend," answered Jorrock merrily enough. "Tell the waiter to bring the 'ole lot, fish, bacon, eggs, juice, segments and all, and no doubt we'll make a 'early enough meal of it."

And so they did, causing something of a sensation among their fellow-travellers, most of whom were literary gentlemen accustomed to breakfast upon nothing heartier than black coffee. As the train sped through some of Mr Jorrock's favourite hunting country, the two sportsmen, still shovelling in the eggs, flipped the pages of the book.

"A regular Beeton!" observed Jorrock, his mouth full. "Some of the

All change

By Bruce Boucher

All Stations: A Journey through 150 years
Science Museum, South Kensington

As the title suggests, nostalgia is the leitmotif of this exhibition, from the entrance, designed as a cut-out procession arch, to the concluding sections on demolition and possible uses of stations in the future. In short compass, one witnesses the complete history of the railway from its uncertain birth and full-blooded maturity in the last century, to its demise and resurrection in our own. The main centre of attention is, of course, the Victorian terminus which is celebrated in reproductions of old photographs, watercolours and cartoons. The great halls, looking like stills from D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*, the magnificent iron and glass sheds, the station as propaganda, the station in war and the station as a way of life for the thousands of workers and hangers-on who populated it, all of these are brilliantly evoked.

All Stations was first shown at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and its transposition is less than a complete success. It meanders along one side of the central hall of the Science Museum in a disconnected series of cubicles. Many of the exhibits are rather dog-eared, connections between photographs and captions are not always clear, and some photographs have disappeared. The main section is well done, but too many of the others simply take up ideas only to discard them. Above all, too little space has been given to the problem of alternative uses for redundant buildings and lines. The laconic nature of the exhibits

most month-watering receipts I ever did see. "Purée of Game in Scallops" - The Earl of Howth's Devilled Kidneys" - "Ham Toast with Poached Eggs". Werry inviting! Just then the waiter brought them a jar of preserves. "Cooper's Oxford Marmalade?" inquired Jorrock, scanning the label. "Never heard of it, in all my horn days as a grocer."

"Of course not," answered Spongy merrily. "Wasn't invented till after your time. See Chapter Seven my dear fellow. All the work of Sarah Jane Cooper, wife of the host at the Angel Inn at Oxford - though I believe she borrowed the recipe from a Scotch woman."

Whether due to the influence of our two heroes, or to the excellent sense of Mr Michael Joseph, cannot be said; but the fact remains that, long before the train reached its destination in the town of Birmingham, the red-coated waiter had so far departed from the usual procedures as to uncork a substantial number of bottles of good claret.

"That's more the line," remarked Spongy, sipping appreciatively. "This tea and coffee idea is only a modern piece of nonsense, after all. Listen to this: 'For hundreds of years, claret, and more particularly ale, were the regular drinks at breakfast.'"

"Ah," rejoined his companion, "but think of the benefits incurred by Jorrock & Co's tea." Whereupon our hero, always the man of business, commenced to take orders for cases of that excellent beverage from his fellow-travellers, which occupation quickly passed the time until the train drew to a halt in the New Street station of Birmingham. Here, our two friends parted company, Jorrock to tend his way to some unsuspecting rural M.P.H., and Spongy to the Midland Hotel, he having discovered that Mr Michael Joseph was about to hold a luncheon there, and being quite certain that his presence was vital to the success of the occasion.

is complemented by the catalogue *All Stations: A Journey through 150 years*. 136pp, £4.95, paperback. 0 931815 16 51, which is handsomely illustrated but short on information.

These drawbacks do not outweigh the value of the exhibition, from which I have taken in particular some with me: a child sitting at the feet of a statue representing Transport which is about to go up on the facade of Grand Central Station in New York in 1914; and a statue lying at the feet of a policeman during the destruction of Euston Station in 1961. One is reminded of Fussell's drawing of the artist overwhelmed by antiquity as he sits beside a colossal foot, for nineteenth-century architecture was conceived on a grand scale by men accustomed to the feelings of an imperial age.

Curiously, the exhibition has some residue of the prejudice that station engineers were the real architects and architects merely decorators, but the evidence proves them wrong. The contradiction between the floridly decorated station and its pseudo-functional shed is surely more apparent than real, for it epitomizes the symbiotic nature of nineteenth-century architecture, its untrammelled feats of engineering on the one hand and its cultural roots in a pre-industrial age on the other. The modern station, shorn of its grandiose hall and shed, looks and is very much a poor relation. The second temple was not like the first.

The Poetry Society is holding a garden party on Sunday July 5 from 4.30 to 9.00, in the gardens of East Court Square, SW5. For £3.00 you can drink champagne and meet Gyles Brandreth, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Christopher Logue and Carol Rumens, or watch any combination of these and many other poets meeting each other.

'Mao'

Sir, - Simon Leys's attack on Ross Terrill and others (March 6) was no doubt savage, but unlike Mr Leys's response, it had both wit and passion, summed up reactions to the work of Terrill and Han Siyin that have long extended far beyond Simon Leys. I have read a good deal of both Leys and Terrill. I know the former and have only heard the latter; after reading Terrill's remarkably oblique response (Letters, June 5) I am content to leave it so. Less subjectively, I did find, on my recent visit to China, spent among academics, considerable interest in and acquaintance with the books of Simon Leys, great admiration for them, and amazement that a simple un-linguistic person like myself should know him and live in the same city with him. To claim, as Ross Terrill does, that Leys's love of China is unrequited is, on my experience, simply false. No one in China, however, wanted to discuss the works of Ross Terrill with me. The reason seems to be obvious - Simon Leys cares more about China than any of its and Chinese are not slow to spot it.

EUGENE KAMENKA,
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The Kornilov Affair

Sir, - Our werry limp back into Cold War binges with it predictable relapse into the Jacobite historiography of the Russian Revolution, Cyril FitzLyon and George Katkov (May 15) resurrect the avuncular figure of General Kornilov and cast him in the role of a Bonnie Prince Charlie. Making an eagle out of a crow is never an easy task but our two sentimentalists should seek a more credible tragic hero.

The most damning indictment of Kornilov and his political intentions can be found among the plaudits of V. Stankevich, Chief Military Commissar of the Provisional Government and outspoken admirer of the General. In his *Vospominaniia* (Berlin: Ladyschikov, 1920), Stankevich recounts Kornilov's desire to become the "new boss", his contempt for democracy "in the sense of giving power to the people", and his alienation from the Old Regime only because it had "lost its serious business-like character" (pp 227-228). Stankevich described the dispatch of Krymov's Savage Division as a "punitive expedition against Red Revolutionary Petrograd". Hardly a hunch likely to respect the fine distinction between the Lenins, the Tseretis, and the Chernovs (p 233). Kornilov emerges from Stankevich's sympathetic memoirs as a typical Tsarist General: authoritarian, vain, vindictive, antisemitic, and driven by an obtuse ambition right out of *Macbeth*, but whatever Kornilov's intentions, Stankevich makes it clear that the General's supporters sought a "regime which could coerce and only give orders" after dispensing with the democratic enunciations established by the February Revolution (p 217).

I was also bothered by FitzLyon's careless use of historical evidence to make his case. He presents without caveat Savinkov's message to Kornilov authorizing a military coup to pre-empt an anticipated Bolshevik uprising. But an inscription was very unlikely at this time. The Bolshevik apparatus was still in a shambles as a result of the repression following the "July Days" and the party's popularity, surging after the failure of the Brusilov Offensive, had not yet peaked. More plausibly, Kerensky and Savinkov used this opportunity to dispose of the Petrograd Soviet as a rival power centre soon to pass democratically under the control of the Bolsheviks. Even more questionable was the author's attempt to make Kornilov's insistence on the presence of "Socialists" in his new government appear as evidence of the General's democratic aspirations. The speciousness of this argument is patent to anybody familiar with the role of Gustav Noske, *der rote Hund*, in post-war Germany's *Freikorps* terror.

The Russian Revolution presents us with a choice between a left-wing authoritarianism and a right-wing authoritarianism, and not that between a Bolshevik dictatorship and a thriving democracy. Underlying FitzLyon's apologies for a military dictatorship is the fact but fair assumption that any government was preferable to a Bolshevik regime certain to degenerate into Stalinism. But viewed from the perspective of 1917, the odds against the latter eventually seem far greater than those against the possibility of a military dictatorship engendering a peculiarly Russian form of fascism, no less brutal than Stalinism. Only a casual disregard for the very real fascist potential in the *Korndorfschilling* permits one to make a Bonnie Prince out of a shabby and brutal pretender.

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Horace Walpole's Correspondence

Sir, - No one will deny the authority of Robert Halsband to review the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence (June 12), but it is a pity you did not choose a reviewer who could express the debt we feel on this side of the Atlantic. Forty-two volumes complete the correspondence of a life that lasted from 1717 to 1797, and the eighteenth century is illuminated for us by the meticulous detail which is not to be denied. When we compare those models of English scholarship, the six-volume Evelyn and the six-volume Boswell, both emanating from Oxford, with the vast undertaking of Yale, which with Indexes will amount to forty-eight much larger volumes, we find them totally eclipsed in scale and certainly matched in faultless scholarship. There is no question of the Yale edition being too big or too detailed: the volumes are a delight to handle and to read, with beautiful typography, and Walpole's own light touch is echoed in the annotations. Their astonishing accuracy extends to the vagaries of English titles, even where the eighteenth century differed from current usage, and the use of English spelling throughout the work is but one example of the fine regard for our sensibilities always shown by its creator, the late W. S. Lewis.

This great contribution by an American to the scholarship of English literature and to the study of our history deserved an obvious academic accolade: it is said that Dr Lewis never knew that moves were being made in this country to confer honours, academic and national, upon him. It is a consolation that he did know something of our admiration for his work; and we may hope that the expert team who have supported him will know how greatly we admire and thank them for their achievement.

WILLIAM CROWDER,
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Wang Fan-hsi

Sir, - Dennis Duncan's review (March 27) of Wang Fan-hsi, *Chinese Revolutionaries* (which I translated for the Oxford University Press) tells less about the book than about the reviewer. The thread along which he strings his many criticisms is Wang's supposed insincerity. "Environment", not ideals or deep intellectual commitment, turned Wang to Trotskyism, just as disillusionment at being sent out of the official leadership turned Chen Tu-hsiu to it. Wang the Oppositionist takes Moscow Gold in Shanghai; Wang the family man dismisses "a couple of wives and a child or two" as irrelevant unworthy of mention by a revolutionary, even though ("suspects" Duncan) these wives and children at times helped to keep Wang. What did Wang live on in Macau, Duncan demands to know? And how did he get to America in his old age? Had Duncan read no further than the cover he would have learnt that Wang is in England, not America; he got there at the invitation of academic admirers after being hounded out of

school-teaching in Macau by pro-Communist officials.)

Two considerations kept Wang from putting personal reminiscences in his book. First, to direct attention to innocent relatives and friends in a memoir of this sort would bring great danger to them. Second, Wang had not wish to put his personal joys and sufferings on a par with the struggles and tragedies of the Chinese revolution, which are the proper subject of his book; for Wang, parading personal details is self-aggrandizement, and as such despicable.

At several points in Wang's career a timely recantation might have ended his persecution and even landed him a job with the Communists. Certainly a handful of his comrades chose this course (dozens more died in the camps and prisons of Stalin, Chiang Kai-shek, the Japanese occupiers and Mao, although you would never know by reading this review). But Wang stayed unwaveringly loyal to the cause he espoused as a young man, even though he has since been exiled penniless, wracked by ill health brought on by years of gaol and torture, left by his wife while in prison and twice divorced by another at the order of the Communist authorities.

Duncan, having spent his early career suppressing revolutionaries in Malaya and giving advice to the US army in Vietnam, has turned to literary counter-insurgency in this review. A more sensitive reviewer could not fail to recognize Wang's stubborn idealism, which has been the very cause of all his troubles; a more knowledgeable one would welcome Wang's memoirs as an invaluable document of the Chinese revolution from the cultured pen of one of its most loyal soldiers, and one which (practically unique among writings of or about Chinese Communism) can be republished a

quarter of a century after it was written without causing its author the least embarrassment.

GREGOR BENTON,
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American English

Sir, - Thinking over Roger Scruton's remarks on American English in the issue of May 22, I have to conclude that - in Mr Scruton's own words - "it is certainly not lack of confidence that has produced them"; nor does it seem to be either breadth of mind, or any particular acquaintance with American speech and writing. The peevishly lofty tone is that of a Chomskian faced with a talking gorilla. As we know, only lunatics being talk; and among human beings only the British talk properly. But what's this stuff doing in an issue of the TLS that opens with Roy Harris's review? How can you start with a man who loves and cherishes our common tongue, and end up sentimentalizing? Oh, I seem to have willfully committed a neologism. I do beg your pardon!

JRSULA LE GUIN,
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Japanese architects

Sir, - I find it rather hard that Chris Fawcett (Letters, June 26) should accuse me of antagonism towards Japanese architects seeing that I was the author (in 1962) of the first book in English on the achievements of modern architecture in Japan, have returned there repeatedly and written widely - and admirably - about it. I have also done my best to draw attention to the work of other Asian architects, both writing about them

and, for example, a few years ago leading a tour of India to see their works. So I am not guilty of what Mr Fawcett rather grandly calls ethnocentrism. He should not impute motives to me which he cannot know about, and when he pronounces what kind of volume I want he is plumb wrong.

All I was doing was commenting on the volume, *Contemporary Architects*, I had in front of me to review, and the proportionate attention given in it to different countries was a natural matter to touch on. I agree with Mr Fawcett's last paragraph: nevertheless I felt it worth noting that, after America and Britain, which I explained had been given by far the most attention, Japan was the country with the greatest number of entries except Germany. I did not say the number was too great; only that it was disproportionate. Twenty-nine Japanese architects, according to my count, are included in the book, but only eight Swedish, eight Swiss, six Argentinian, four Danish, three Italian and two Portuguese. Ethnocentricity does not come into it.

J. M. RICHARDS,
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'A Staffordshire Murderer'

Sir, - Mysteriously, James Fenton has in his poem "A Staffordshire Murderer" (June 5) turned the Number of the Beast on its head: "Nine hundred and ninety-nine, the Number of the Beast!" (Fenton); "the number of the beast is six hundred and sixty-six" (Revelations 13, 18). "The number represents a man's name"; whom does Fenton have in mind?

JOHN TROY,
21a Farndon Road, Oxford.

Among this week's contributors

DAVID ALEXANDER is a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

ROBERT ALTEB's books include a biography of Stendhal, *A Lion for Love*, 1980.

T. J. BINYON is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

SIMON BLACKBURN's publications include *Reason and Prediction*, 1972.

BRUCE BOUCHER is a lecturer in the History of Art at University College London and a regular contributor to the *Burlington Magazine*.

JOHN RUSSELL BROWN is Professor of English at the University of Sussex and Associate Director of the National Theatre.

MALCOLM BUOO is a lecturer in Philosophy at University College London.

J. M. CAMERON's most recent book is *On the Idea of a University*, 1978.

PETER CARRY is a Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Trinity College, Oxford.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's biography of W. H. Auden is reviewed in the TLS this week.

RICHARD COMES is editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

PETER J. CONRAD teaches English at the South Bank Polytechnic, London.

CLAIRE CROSE's most recent book is *Church and People 1450-1660*, 1976.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is the editor of *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*, 1980.

R. H. C. DAVIS is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Birmingham.

MALCOLM DEAS is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford.

JOHN FORESTER is the author of *Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 1980.

NORIE FRANKLAND is working on a biography of Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught.

ROGER GARPITT's most recent poems are published in *Wolf*, to be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

JULIE HANKEY's theatre-historical edition of *Richard III* will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

ROSALIND HILL is at present working on an edition of the Register of Archbishop Melton.

HAROLD HORSION is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

GRAHAM HUGHES's books include *An Essay on Criticism*, 1973.

JAMES KIRKUP's translation of Camara Leye's *The Guardian of the Word* will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

W. J. F. JENNER's translation of Lu Xun: *Selected Poems* is forthcoming from the Foreign Languages Press, Peking.

OWEN LATTIMORE's books include *From China Looking Outward*, 1964.

JULIUS LEWIN's books include *Politics and Law in South Africa*, 1963.

RICHARD LINDLEY is co-author with Roger Fellows and Graham Maddox of *What Philosophy Does*, 1978.

GREVILLE LINDOP's biography of De Quincey, *The Opium-Eater*, will be published shortly.

PETER LINERMAN is a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.

TIMOTHY MCFARLANE is a lecturer in German at University College London.

M. E. YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

PERCY M. YOUNG is author of *A History of British Music*, 1967.

ANDREW MOTIUM won the first Arvon Foundation/Observer Poetry Competition earlier this year.

DAVID NOKES wrote the script of *No Country for Old Men*, reviewed in Commentary this week.

PATRICK O'CONNOR is the editor and publisher of *A Tribune to Yvonne*, 1978.

ROLAND OLIVER is Professor of the History of Africa at the University of London.

RICHARD OSBORNE is a regular contributor to *Gramophone*.

STUART PIGGOTT's books include *Ruins in a Landscape*, 1976, and *Antiquity Deceived*, 1980.

PETER PORTER's books include *After Martial*, 1972, and *English Subtleties*, 1981.

E. C. RILEY is the author of *Cervantes' Theory of the Novel*, 1962.

RICHARD ROATY's most recent book is *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1980.

WILLIAM SCAMMELL's collection of poems, *Yes and No*, was published in 1979.

JULIAN SYMONS's most recent crime novel, *Sweet Adeline*, was published last year.

MICHAEL TANNER has contributed to *The Wagner Companion*.

KEITH WALKER is a lecturer in English at University College London.

BRAYAN WILSON is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

M. E. YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

PERCY M. YOUNG is author of *A History of British Music*, 1967.

Theatre Production Studies

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Homosexual happy endings . . . and lesbian dilemmas

By Peter J. Conradi

RICHARD DIPPOLD: *Cracks in the Lunge* Stories by Gay Men 134pp. Gay Men's Press. £2.50, 0 90740 11 X

The success of an anthology, like that of a good party, need not depend on the adequacy of its premises. This anthology of sixteen stories by thirteen gay men reads at times like a gathering staged for the feebly hopeful reason that at least all the guests have one thing in common. The common topic, serious and important as it is, is not always enough to secure the reader's pleasure.

L. M. Forster's one openly homosexual novel, *Maurice*, finished in 1914 and dedicated to "a Happier Year", ended with Maurice and his Mellors-like friend entering the festive Greenwood world, turning their backs on the dead conventions of the heterosexual majority, abandoning society. Today's homosexual festivity takes place somewhat uneasily within the common social world, but without looking very festive. In Barry Newell's "Decadent" Peter and his third-world lover Ravi are "both outsiders, outcasts almost". That "almost" is revealing, for, though they both often "hegan to talk about life after the revolution", the identification of being homosexual with being black reads as wishful. In Ian Everton's "Chrissals" three gay friends metamorphose either voluntarily or involuntarily (it's deliberately left unclear) into creatures from a neolithic world "embracing two orders of nature, the insects and the mammals" and on a moonless night take off for the Scottish highlands "far from people, for that was what they were not. Happiness depends on this circumstance." You may be obliged to dare to be different, and ironizing your fate may be a way of transforming it.

Transformations are played with also in Robert Gluck's "Elements of a Coffee Service" which gives us two endings. In the first the "hunch of people in a car yelling faggot" smashes into a telegraph pole. The second nicely places the first as consoling and frivolous: the narrator carefully pledges himself in future to eschewing frivolity and to asking questions "more energetic and precise". The two pastoral endings in Nonweiler's "The Door into the Rosegarden" flatter each other. Nick, on the way home from zapping a film which lubriciously exploits gay stereotypes, is as alienated by the empty sexual coexistence of the gay world as by the stupid brutishness of the straight. His eyes meet those of a young black man in the first ending, he and his new friend are speechlessly "happy simply in the knowledge that one another existed"; in the second they stand and kiss while the escalator bears them heavenwards into the world beyond alienation.

Some stories are content simply to locate classic plot reversals within the new social landscape. "One of the Risks", by David Rees, presents one hazard of promiscuity. In Peter Robins' "Blind Date" Alan goes to meet someone who has answered his ad in a gay lonelyhearts column, and the surprise is proffered as a pure irony, refreshingly unromanticized. In Eric Presland's "Switchboard" the reversal is also accompanied by a due Aristotelian discovery when another Alan finally meets the distressed middle-aged man who has rung the gay switchboard where he works. Other stories, more ambitious, and sometimes less persuasive, try to imagine the gay world from the standpoint of an often self-deceived straight observer, whose bad faith they highlight: a conventional schoolteacher in Peter Robins' "An Inexact Parallel"; a singer in Dumont Howard's "Coda", who discovers that both her audience, like Judy Garland's, and her lover, are predominantly gay; an inarticulate working-class olderster in Eric Presland's "Mr and Mr Mandel" who has never understood the nature of his love for a now dead Jewish tailor.

In the best stories here oppression is something you do to yourself, too, (which is how oppression succeeds), and society begins in the head. In Adam Mars-Jones's cool and precise "From Day (by pumpkin light)", Jim, with handsome features, stupid green eyes and a "genital brain", attends a Halloween Costume Ball, a celebration of strangeness, in Virginia. This attempted coupling is compared to that of

a species of mantis whose female bites off her husband's head during early foreplay, leaving him to administer the empoisons on Automatic Pilot. She has sound evolutionary reasons for this, but her lover can't hear them. He continues to go through the motions, and here among the higher primates, so does Jim.

Jan Ward's witty "Dear Mrs Ashe" sets off the "pursuit of the perfect senti-

ment" against the pursuit of emotional plenty and good sex on the motorway.

Perhaps the short story is by its nature intransigent to polemic, though it clearly likes lovely pain. It likes also to induct us into an anti-heroic and low view of social possibility, is unkind to human difference, likes to house defeat, favours precipitate and often nasty narrative surprises. Certainly the better stories here often have their protagonists going home alone, or, if in company, experiencing a keener solitude, left up with society in every sense. Like the nice guests you never learn quite enough about them: they manage an artful balance between reticence and disclosure and leave you satisfyingly hungry. The worst are prurid, or, like Forster's embracing homosexual stories in *The Life to Come*, coyly buttonhole you and enjoy your discomfort at their timid revelation.

Changing places

By James Lasdun

DAVID POWNALL: *Beloved Latitudes* 144pp. Gollancz. £6.95, 0 573 02988 9

A chameleon adorns the cover of David Pownall's new novel, and forms the emblem dividing each section. The novel itself makes no direct reference to this motif, but its significance emerges as its story of political development in a Central African state of historical truth, and the ways in which events conspire to impose the same identity upon even the most radically different of rulers.

"There is", says Male Sehushin, the imprisoned ex-president, "a terrible law which makes one government do what the other ones did." Sehushin is typical of the kind of charismatic African leader in whom idealism and evil have become linked to the point where they can no longer be distinguished from each other. His successor Hubert Hiweve, an academic singularly lacking in charisma, could not be less like Sehushin, yet in his efforts to replace Sehushin's atrocities with the sanity of rational government he finds that "terrible law" forcing him to become a dictator, and to eliminate his enemies by the same ruthless agency as his predecessor used. The final transformation of this chameleon is neatly perhaps too neatly symbolized in the end of the book when Hiweve appears at Sehushin's execution wearing the tribally that belonged to Sehushin's English succubus and political advisor "Neville the Devil".

By balancing Sehushin's narrative with the account of Hiweve's rise, Pownall establishes a sustained ambivalence that subtly undermines any attempt on the reader's part to determine a "true" version of history. Only this elusive truth can be of service to Hiweve in his efforts to find the secret of Sehushin's former power, and with this in mind he gives Sehushin the task of dictating his memoirs to Neville in prison.

The bare facts of Sehushin's story are these: he attends a mission school where the history of Africa from the end of colonialism is acted out in miniature; the boys form gangs and run riot, later reneging on a tribal basis. The teachers lose control and withdraw, and Sehushin emerges as a natural leader, asserting his authority over his peers and restoring order to the "post-independence" chaos of the school. A similar sequence of events sees him take control of a state "set up as a failed experiment in freedom", and rise to the presidency. He speaks eloquently of his ambitious projects to revitalize his country; but the reliability of his rhetoric is brought into question by the fact of Neville's evident reluctance to record his master's words. And such

clues as he might have been able to offer Hiweve are lost anyway, as it transpires in a final twist that Neville has been writing down, not Sehushin's story, but his own alleged testament to the impossibility of retrieving the truth from the past.

As far as it goes, *Beloved Latitudes* is an intelligent novel, carefully constructed and lucidly written. The three principal characters are portrayed deftly and convincingly — the intellectual Hiweve desperately seeking the secret of government while dribbles of Germanic run unceremoniously down his cheek; Sehushin retaining spiritual control over a country he has brutalized, even after he has been overthrown and imprisoned; Neville, enigmatic almost to the point of invisibility. Each is the creation of an author with a clear sense of the relation of politics to the individual. The use of the mission school as Sehushin's police proving ground smacks slightly of contrivance, as does the suggestion that Hiweve seriously expects to find the secret of power in the memoirs of a man he has condemned to death. But such faults as the novel has are more to do with its omissions than with its contents.

The retrospective nature of the story gives much of the action a certain off-stage quality. We hear of violence, intrigue and revolt, but Pownall seldom attempts to present these elements with any immediacy. Salient incidents in Sehushin's career are compressed to the point where they lose all fictional life.

Pownall's defence might be that his interests lie not so much in the events themselves as in the interpretations of their historical significance. But in fiction the strength of such an interpretation must be in direct proportion to the vigour given to the events behind it. If Pownall had focused a little more of his attention on these events he might have turned what is already a sensitive and penetrating parable into a very powerful novel.

Imaginary life of a domestic servant

Little by little by careful hush-minding
The regulated hours would lend
To a blizzard of cokes and ten

Little by little by withdrawing
From the tones of the drawing-room
The gardener became passionate or the chauffeur

As sometimes in a sole one sight
A quiet selective naked garrison
To change countries in, to flee.

Elizabeth Smither

By Heather Lawton

JAN CLAUSEN: *Mother, Sister, Daughter, Lover* 136pp. The Women's Press. £2.50, 0 7143 3868 8

Is a reviewer today required to suspend critical judgment on being told that Jan Clausen, an American poet and author of this collection of nine stories, is a "lesbian lover editor clerical worker non-biological parent political activist runner writer"? There is certainly a good deal of special pleading on Ms Clausen's part. All the stories are about relationships, whether between female lovers and sisters, or mothers and daughters. A certain neo-dimensional quality emerges from the collection, perhaps related to the fact that none of the stories contains any male characters (apart, that is, from one or two shadowy, deserted husbands who appear either to be shooting-up somewhere out East, or getting re-married to sexist ladies who shave their legs and wear make-up). The feminist/lesbian heroines appear to merge into each other from story to story: is it Chris, Martha, Alice or Leah who is dropping up Chinese vegetables and "sit-fying" over the world? Which one is publishing poems in *Az* and which one is naturally attending school "on the welfare"?

In places Jan Clausen attempts to take an ironic view of her world, as for example in "Blood/Milk" about an alternative feminist publication party: "But have you seen the ads for Blood/Milk. 'One woman's painfully honest record of her journey to another kind of love.' 'It's so sleek.' Jennifer moaned."

In the men's room

By Patricia Craig

AMANDA CROSS: *A Death in the Faculty* 156pp. Gollancz. £5.95, 0 575 02982 X

Since Dorothy L. Sayers, in 1923, placed her first corpse in one, the bathtub has loomed compellingly in the imaginations of detective novelists. It is easy to see why. There is something peculiarly horrible about the violation of the bathroom, which is, or should be, a fine and private place. When Amanda Cross's latest victim is discovered in a bathtub, however, it is only a preliminary assault. She emerges from that particular deathtrap physically unharmed. Some time later, her body is found in — of all places — a men's room at Harvard University.

Kate Fansler, Amanda Cross's academic detective, is not slow to see

the implication of this setting. The dead woman, Janet Mandelbaum, had been the university's first female Professor and, as a consequence, the object of prejudices both old-fashioned and new-fangled. Resented by the entire English Department for being there at all, and resented by certain feminists for failing to throw in her lot with the women's movement, Professor Mandelbaum is the target for a fair amount of malice and acrimony. Her rather unattractive manner does not help to make her a popular figure. The "bathtub incident" is engineered by those who wish to do her, or at least her reputation, harm. Her drink is tempered with a Faculty party, she is lured into a mahogany tub in ladies' rest room, and comes to find herself — horrors! — in the company of a feminist from an all-woman commune. "Who the fuck are you?" this person is demanding. A muted scandal subsequently breaks. The word "lesbian" is murmured. Janet, in desperation, remembers her old acquaintance Kate Fansler — but Kate ("a sort of overage Nancy Drew", as her husband put it in a previous novel) arrives too late to be of much help to poor Janet, disgraced in the ladies' room and dead in the genitals.

Readers of Amanda Cross's earlier books will know that Kate's own manner is thoroughly agreeable, her observations witty and her erudition lightly displayed. All the qualities still make her so engaging a heroine as they appear — but somehow her detaching has become a little perfunctory. "Not exactly a full roster of suspects, Kate sadly thought"; certainly this novel has neither the density of plot that distinguished *The Question of Max* (1976) nor the scholarly ebullience that made, say, *Poetic Justice* (1970) so entertaining. If, like Sayers's *Gaudy Night* (1935), *A Death in the Faculty* links its mystery with a topical question (in this case the same one: feminism), and the varieties of dogma it can accommodate, it is less satisfactory than the Sayers novel in its resolution and in the intricacy of its puzzle-making. Narrative delicacy and cogency, however: these remain undiminished.

In a beloved place

By William Scammell

NORMAN NICHOLSON: *Sea to the West* 64pp. Faber. £5.95, 0 571 11745 7

Not long ago, in an *Observer* review of poets living in the north-east, Peter Porter detected "a new tilt to regionalism in British poetry" which "amounts to a sort of resentment, a sour definition of honesty". Shortly before that, in a *Sunday Times* profile of Marjorie Amis, Ian Hamilton contemptuously dismissed all doubts of that writer's current status as "losers" and "wets" given to fantasies about "nepotism" and "metropolitan string-pulling". And some little time before that Clive James (author of *The Metropolitan Critic* and various unreliable commentaries) was to be heard defending *The New Review* against "talentless regional poets who run in and out of Peak District pubs with carrots stuck up their noses in order to raise the consciousness of the indigenous human".

All good fun, of course, but worryingly provincial in outlook. Who and where are the metropolitan poets with whom "regional poets" presumably contrast? Bunting, Larkin, R.S. Thomas, Graham, Wright, Garroch, Hughes, Mackay Brown, Tomlinson, Hill, Fisher, Kinsella, Heaney, Mahon, Harrison, Dunn? — not a cockney vowel or Johnsonian overview among them. As for the poets one associates with London, such as Porter himself, they are either driven back to their roots or else invent a landscape to inhabit, one usually named Ari and lacking several vital amenities. Since the Romantics, indeed, the term "regional poet" has become a near-synonym for the rude mechanicals have taken over the commanding heights of our post-economy, thus reducing the Oxbridge/London axis to a thin blue line of managerial humdrum.

Not that Norman Nicholson's quietly excellent new book seems, at first sight, to lend much support to such a conclusion. Nicholson is a regional poet par excellence, it might be said; and he says as much himself in this epigraph from late Auden: "A poet's hope: to be, like some valley cheese, local, but prized elsewhere." ("Epistle to a Godson"). This is dauntingly humble: no affluence please, we're British. It also infantilizes, surely, as patently as the rhetoric it seeks to discredit. William Barnes's poems, for example, will not be improved, or disimproved, or exterminated, and neither will Douglas, or by confining them to Wessex, or by explaining that the locals like them. In brief, the disclaimer sells poetry. All poetry, woefully short.

The sea of *Sea to the West* is literally that part of the Irish Sea which washes up against the author's native Milford on the coast of Cumberland. In the meditative little poem he confronts its appearances:

When the sea's to the West
The evenings are one dazzle —
You can find no sign of water.
Sun upflows the horizon:
Waves of shining
Heave, crest, fracture,
Explode on the shore;
The wide day burns
In the incandescent mantle of the air.

One registers the shock of "upflows", and the unshowy brilliance of the concluding image, with the homely yet transcendent connotations of "mantle", as typical of this poet's vision. In the next stanzas he takes us back to his fifteen-year-old self contemplating the same scene, then forward to now and after-now, and ends "Let my eyes at the last be blinded. Not by the dark! But by dazzle." By a tacit extension, both in this and in other poems, Nicholson invests the "gutterings and sykes of light" with something of the potency of Arnold's sea of faith, and further with intimations of mortality and approaching death. It is more convincing than the directly Christian abstractions of a poem such as "The Dumb Spirit", which opened Norman Nicholson's last collection *A Local Habit*.

Elsewhere, confronting a map of England as a schoolboy, he speaks of "a blurred and hatched diagram of dialects and geology" ("At the Music Festival"). which summarizes many of his familiar concerns. There are new poems about the simplest constituents of landscape, bees, hills, mountains, woods, clouds, dunes, dunes, plankton, roadsools; and the corresponding social and linguistic minutiae of a decaying, depopulated early-industrial hinterland are likewise celebrated, or mourned, in a vocabulary of filially economical as a drystone wall.

Some pieces are re-workings of subjects better treated in earlier collections. "Haymaking", for instance, employs a favourite device, the paradox embedded in a colloquial phrase ("It's late so soon", he said), more effectively used in "Old Man at a Cricket Match" ("It's mending worse", he said). "On the Dis-mantling of Millam Trowers" reuses Wordsworth's famous gaffe about the river Duddon — "remote from every taint of sordid industry" — reminding us of Nicholson's fine early poem "To the River Duddon", which sees further into Wordsworth than many a book-length commentary. Norman Nicholson's sadness about the passing away of the town works is understandable ("The town shrinks and dwindles. / Old people's bungalows creek half-way up the hill . . . An age is postponed off", but the poem is suffused with a not-altogether-appropriate nostalgia, as though "A hundred years of the Bessemer process" were somehow inextricably noble, rather than the mixed blessing it probably was.

"Cloud on Black Combe", one of three poems about the mountain which looms close to Milford, is a fine example of Nicholson's ability to make something new and persuasive out of what might seem old-fashioned Ruskinian particulars — though I regret the loss of a fine image between the poem's first appearance in a *Celtic Press Pamphlet* (1975) and its reprinting here. "Black Combe holds light / To its judge's wig of cloud" becomes simply " . . . to its hill of cloud", perhaps because a later image likens the hill to a wig, but building on the light of the bright, tufted and brackney brine" and the poet thought judges shouldn't modulate into rams, though the colloquial strikes me as a happy one. The poem is written, like many others in this collection, in free verse, with an irregular but effective use of half and full rhyme. As with "Shingle", whose packed short lines scrutinize the quotidian mysteries of the sea-shore, one wonders if the influence of writers like Hughes and Ted Hughes is visible here, and then remembers that this poet was uncouthly "into nature" long before the gathering of "the Tribe of Ted".

Free verse enables Nicholson to make plenty of plain statements — "Some people are flower lovers. / I'm a weed lover"; "I laughed once at those words"; "If the town won't talk, / Must put words in its mouth" — and to continue his tacit mining of the autobiographical material so memorably opened up in *A Local Habit*. Images of light and darkness dominate the book, underlining the poet's dual allegiance to the world before his eyes and the one immanent in the rocks and streams of a beloved place. "I / Lean on my wordy counter" he says in "The Safe Side", alluding to the drapery shop run by his father in the house his son still lives in. "Expounding that much, this much . . ." It is our luck that the goods are of such fine quality. Why, you could wear them down to London.

Carcanet have recently published *Thomas Gray: Selected Poems*, edited by John Heath-Stubbs (86pp. £2.50, 0 85635 317 3). The edition includes, notes make claims for Gray as "the most considerable poet of the mid-eighteenth century". Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" also appears in *The Batsford Book of Religious Verse*, edited by Elizabeth Jennings (92pp. £5.95, 0 7134 3889 4), an anthology which mingles Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Southey, Vaughan and Milton with Robert Lowell, W. H. Auden, John Betjeman and Charles Causley.



"Sunset", by Subrata Roy, a drawing in black chalk, pen and brown ink to be included in a sale of Important Old Master Drawings of Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1, on Thursday July 7; the second day's sale is on Thursday July 9.

Resources of recollection

By Grevel Lindop

JAMES FENTON: *A German Requiem* 99p. Salamander Press, 73 Morning-side Park, Edinburgh EH10. £1.50.

James Fenton once described a visit to Auden, during the poet's last, somewhat gloomy, months at Oxford. Auden "seemed to have read everything, to have done everything, to have written in every poetic form excepting those like the triptych which he thought rather silly"; he confessed to a desire for some new literary influence from which to "bounce off". Fenton suggested Clough. "Clough? No, I've been through Clough", replied Auden. "I was thinking of the Beatles".

Like Auden, Fenton is a poet who has often needed someone to "bounce off", and the inner significance of that anecdote (which Fenton recorded in a *New Statesman* article) is that then and for several years afterwards he was himself following Auden. The marks are clearly visible in *Terminal Moraine*, the collection of poems which appeared in 1972: there is a fascination with unusual and demanding poetic forms, occasionally applied to a clinical, cynical use of the ballad:

Now is the boiler out. The cellar
Fumes into the hall
Above, the comet scintillates
Cuts and the stars fall.

Let us reconstitute your love.
The best dry cleaning wind
Will purge the graying from your cloth
And leave a glow behind.

Passages of sharp, witty observation are linked to self-portraiture so brittle and constrained that the whole suggests terror and obsession:

There are boys with guns
And hikers in bright socks. I do not rise
early.
I eat in an orderly fashion and think
clearly.

I arrange objects in rooms according to a
design
And am usually presentable. If the
prospect is fine

For a walk, naturally go.
And there is a tendency to loot the
dictionary or the science periodicals for
strange treasures. Celebrating the in-
tensity of a limited vision in "South
Park Road" he announces, "I deal in
minutiae, / Not with the fungus growing
on the low walls but / In the globose vesicu-
late hyaline cloud". A reference to
"the context of the baadiscarp" is
glossed in "Notes", which turns out to
be a poem in itself, carefully sliced
from an article in *Mycolgia*. Similarly,
"A Frog" is freed from the technical
undergrowth of "What the frog's eye
undergrowth of" in *Proceedings of the
Institute of Radio Engineers*, 1940.
(Wasn't it Auden who told someone
compiling a Christmas "Books of the
Year" survey that the best thing he'd

read that year was an article on slumps
in *Scientific American*?) One can't help
wondering what Fenton was looking
for as he browsed in *Proc. Inst. Radio
Engs.* and came upon the frog. But —
such details aside — *Terminal Moraine*
does give an impression of Fenton
watching for poems to happen in the
verbal forests and mists of his mind
and lifting them out, intact and wriggling,
for our enjoyment.

Not all the "found poems" in *Terminal Moraine* were verbal. "The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford" in great part
simply catalogues a selection of the
objects to be found therein:
mice costumes
From the Torres Straits,
A Mizrapur a sultan
Called junkin', used by aboriginal
tribes to attract small game.
On dark nights, a mule-vinlin.
Whistling oars, colic cigarettes
And a mask of Sango, the Devil Doctor.
The eyelids worked by strings.

With a subject like the Pitt-Rivers it
would be hard to fail entirely. But the
title indicates a different handicap,
voluntarily undertaken: that of provin-
cialism. Most of the poems seem
distinctly academic, more, they seem
distinctly Oxford. The "long stream of
blooms" mentioned in the epigraph's
description of a glacial moraine sug-
gests, among other things, the
architectural masses one encounters in
a walk through North Oxford: not only
the Museums but (in "South Parks
Road") St Frideswide's and the School
of Inorganic Chemistry, and in "Poésie
de Département" the Pharmacology
Department.

Fenton's work since *Terminal Moraine* has consisted of some excel-
lent journalism — one recalls his dis-
patches from Vietnam and Cambodia
in the early 1970s, as well as numerous
ideologies of municipal, judicial and
political authority in Britain — and a
series of finely-polished poems appear-
ing one by one, at long intervals, in the
literary weeklies. His preference for
what might be called the long short
poem — fifty lines or so — makes each
one seem very much a self-contained
production. *A German Requiem*,
beautifully hand-printed by Charlie
Boxer and Tom Fenton, is the latest
and, I think, the best. In nine stanzas,
one to a page, it explores reactions to
death — individual and collective — and
the lies that move in to bury the dead,
and cover up the past. The poem's
ordering principle seems basically
cinematic, a series of close-ups linked
by dissolve and montage.

We begin with the problem itself,
defined in the rhythm of a ritual chant:
It is not what they built. It is what they
knocked down.
It is not the houses. It is the spaces
between the houses
It is not your memories which haunt you.
It is not what you have written down.
It is what you have forgotten, what you
must forget.
And with very few oblique should
discover a ritual.

There is then a close-up of a woman
taking a bus to the cemetery. "The city
of your ancestors, / Which stands on the
hill opposite, with gleaming pediment-
squares, / As vivid as this charming
square, your home". But even as the
necropolis seems about to become a
comfortable, bourgeois landscape, the
nightmare surges up:
But when so many had died, so many
lived, as such speed,
Tic-tac were no cities waiting for the
victims.
They unscrewed the name-plates from
the shafts of the shafts, the shafts
And carried them away with the
caskets.

The squares and parks are overspread
with "the eloquence of young
cemetaries"; the countless dead label-
led with their brass and enamel floor-
plagues, so that, for example,

Your uncle's grave informed you that he
lived on the third floor, left.
You were asked please to ring, and he
would come down in the lift
To which one needed a key . . .

We dissolve, next, to the fantasies that
spill away guilt: "it seems there is no
limit to the resourcefulness of recollec-
tion. You see this cupboard? A
priest-hole! / And in that lumber-room
whole generations have been housed
and fed." And we withdraw, finally, to
the ritual repetitions from which we
begin. "Even the enquirer is
clammed, / He forgets to pursue the
point. / It is not what he wants to
know. / It is what he wants not to
know".

A German Requiem is a poem of
considerable rhetorical and magisterial
power, exploring a central contempo-
rary problem: how do we, and how
should we, live with the memory (or
non-memory) of the organized mass-
murder in which so many "civilized"
societies have engaged at one time or
another in the present century? Yet it
avoids losing the personal dimension in
the historical or limiting itself to a
particular time and place. It also shows
Fenton freed from the Auden influ-
ence and not too obviously "bouncing
off" any other poet. There are traces of
Eliot and, I suspect, of Enzensberger,
and one passage unexpectedly recalls
the Plath of the "Bee" poems; but no
damage is done.

More important still, the poem
seems heartfelt. Too much of Fenton's
earlier work had about it a chilly,
reserved quality quite different from
the warmth and engagement of his
journalism. Even his poem about Viet-
nam, "In Notebook", which
appeared in 1976, seemed curiously
flat and decorative. When it ended
with the line "And I'm afraid most
of my friends are dead", one had to
believe that there was real anguish
somewhere in the background, but the
poem didn't in any way convey it. If *A
German Requiem* signals a new phase,
where technique will function to em-
body and share feeling rather than
evade it, James Fenton could emerge
as a fine and important poet.

The natural and the formal

By Simon Blackburn

JAMES D. McCRAWLEY:

Everything that linguists have always wanted to know about logic but were ashamed to ask. 508pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £15. 0 (hbk) 125147

James D. McCrawley's amusing title involves him in a delicate task. For the genre to which it alludes is, I imagine, apt to be disappointing. One can give a detailed description of what those engaged upon some activity do, of the positions that can be taken up, even of the penetration achieved in various areas, without transmitting a clear sense of why the activity matters so much, nor of how much we are missing if we do not join in. In the one case this further sense is gained through practice. In the case of logic it needs a clear perception of the nature of logical analysis and their relation to other kinds of investigation of language. McCrawley's sophisticated, massive,

and conspicuously well-informed introduction to logic certainly provides many of the materials for assessing the relationship between logic and semantics on the one hand, and the language we actually speak on the other.

In his preface McCrawley relates how he was prompted to write the book by exasperation at teaching from even the best logic text-books. It is a curious fact that most logicians, philosophers, and allied workers find most introductory logic texts exasperating, and many of us are prompted to try to write our own. The reason is that a book evades discussion of the fundamental notions involved in presenting logic — sentence, proposition, truth, possibility, reference, predication and so on — it attracts censure on that score; if on the other hand it develops discussion of such notions it enters treacherous waters, with less agreed charts. McCrawley's approach is not to produce a profound philosophical treatment of the basic concepts, but to present as much as possible of the work which logicians have done, and which has bearing on

the semantics of sentences in natural languages. The philosophical issues emerge in individual discussions of the adequacy of formal accounts of sentences of natural language.

The book covers much more than most introductory texts. McCrawley presents not only classical propositional and predicate calculus, but also modal logic, many-valued and presuppositional logics, fuzzy logic, and useful discussions of possible world semantics, Montague grammar, the λ -calculus, many terms, intensional calculus, and other topics of potential interest to the linguist. Not are the different areas merely surveyed; McCrawley thoroughly engages with the positions he sets out, and throughout brings to bear a wide range of pertinent linguistic phenomena. Indeed, apart from its impressive coverage, the main strength of the work lies in the way it develops a linguist's sensitivity to the surface of language in order to assess the adequacy of familiar formal treatments. McCrawley is well aware of the way in which the considerations made famous by H. P. Grice help to defend the correspon-

dence between the elements of natural language, with all their surface complexities, and the apparently simple elements of formal languages. Nevertheless he frequently finds that the correspondence is inexact.

Perhaps partly because the coverage is so large, it is not always easy to grasp the overall shape of McCrawley's own views. The same subjects, such as definite descriptions, or pronouns, or restricted quantification, are raised in a number of different places, and it is left to the reader to assemble any overall theory for himself. Pronouns, for instance, afford an excellent example of devices where acquaintance with the relevant surface structures is essential to constructing logical theory, but equally where knowledge of logical theory is essential to any syntactical treatment. One would therefore expect McCrawley's blend of abilities to produce particular insights in such an area, and it is a little disappointing that although his word contains many of the right trees, they are not only scattered, but rather overshadowed by their neighbours. Thus pronouns are rightly introduced as devices which identify the propositional function determining the logical form given to a sentence, or in other words as the bound variables of quantification theory. But subsequently McCrawley brings out clearly why in the Bach-Peters sentence "the pilot that shot at the MIG that chased him" the pronoun "it" serves not as a bound variable, but as a pronoun of laziness, going proxy for a repetition of the description of the MIG.

Finally he endures the idea of Lauri Karttunen, beautifully developed by the late Gareth Evans, that sometimes pronouns simply serve as devices referring to items located by some previous chunk of context or discourse. The simplest example illustrating why this idea is needed is something like "three people attended the lecture, and they learned a lot" which does not mean what it would come out naturally as meaning on the bound variable view: "three people are such that they attended the lecture and they learned a lot." The fact that even quantifiers can serve to locate objects of subsequent reference is surprising enough to deserve a good deal of attention, yet McCrawley mentions it only to pass on to some quite different themes connected with speakers' intentions.

The preface to the book gives rise to some philosophical expectations which are only partially met in the text. McCrawley seems to believe that he has developed a notion which

has more expressive power than natural language, yet it is not at all clear that this is so. The main divergence is simply to adopt the Polish device of putting functions outside concatenations of expressions identifying their arguments. More seriously, he promises philosophical fire, in connection with unrestricted quantification: "I regard that policy as the most pernicious and perverted idea in the history of logic, and hold it responsible for an immense volume of pseudo-problems (particularly the alleged difficulties raised by the recognition of 'nonexistent objects') that have consumed the energies of many otherwise productive philosophers". Unfortunately he nowhere tells us how alleged difficulties decrease according to our views of quantification. Restricting quantification means that we talk of some for all, few, most, etc. men, books, animals, or whatever, and exclude the classical paraphrase, according to which any such statement says something about things in general, with the restriction to men, books, or whatever pushed into the predicate.

Such a policy means that many English sentences get a more natural treatment. But it makes it no easier to know whether we can be allowed to divide men, books, or whatever into two further classes — those that exist and those that do not, but are merely imaginary — and it is the propriety of this division that has consumed the energies of all those otherwise productive philosophers. McCrawley can certainly cite sentences in which we appear to treat imaginary objects as objects of reference, with their own identity and ability to feature in the thoughts of different people. But his own analysis is content with the notion of reference to items in belief-worlds or imaginary worlds, and even if such notions are defensible and necessary, it is philosophically unduly complacent to suppose that only pseudo-problems occasion suspicion of their laxitude. Among the genuine problems exacerbated by such an analysis will be that of connecting reference with other, natural, relations between aspeakers and their world, and, for that matter, of retaining reference with its parent, truth.

All in all, then, if the question linguists wanted to ask about logic were philosophical in nature, the book only partially justifies its title. But perhaps linguists, like so many other people, are not ashamed of failing to ask far clearer theories of these concepts, but merely of lack of knowledge of the things logicians have done. And if that is so McCrawley's book answers their need admirably.

Adventure and after

By E. C. Riley

MELVEENA MCKENDRICK:

Cervantes. 311pp. Hutchinson, £6.95. 0 136 56154 5

Loosely speaking, you could say that the first half of Cervantes' life was dedicated to living a novel and the second half to writing one. Except that neither a life nor a great novel is ever that simple. However, the stark division between the almost incredibly adventurous years of soldiering and slavery and the dreary grind that filled most of the later years poses something of a problem for the biographer. This problem is made more difficult, if anything, by the documentation published by Luis Astrana Marín, who brought out the last volume of his gargantuan biography in 1958. Few of the facts and figures in the deeds, depictions, financial statements, accounts and other documents, relating either to Cervantes' family life or to his jobs as commissary and tax collector, make unthrilling reading. We still possess hardly any information of the kind we should most like to have, derived from autobiography letters and the personal testimony of contemporaries. So while it may be true, as J. H. Plumb remarks in his foreword to Melveena McKendrick's book, that we know much more about Cervantes' life than we do about Shakespeare's, our intimate view of the author of *Don Quixote* is by no means correspondingly more complete. Dr McKendrick has followed in the exemplary footsteps of Fitzmaurice-Kelly and not tried to

touch up the picture by using material from the fictional works.

Remarkably, her biography is the second in English to appear in two years and the third in a decade. Its immediate predecessor, William Byron's account, is very different, being twice as long and highly imaginative, though compulsively readable. I think it would be possible to give any biography of Cervantes, whether scholarly or popular, a colourful-readable, a little added depth by a more judicious use of the pages in his printed works where he is manifestly expressing his personal views. I mean the prologues and dedications and posthumous of the *Tragicomedia*. Apart from such factual information as they contain, with careful dissection they would yield some insights into states of mind. Limited as such insights would be, they could be more useful in a biography than the usual short forays into literary criticism, although Dr McKendrick is considerably more dependable than most where this is concerned, if perhaps a bit over-concerned about Cervantes' humour, his literary theories and what not.

Known facts and uncertainties are handled in a measured and sensible way, and from time to time useful second thoughts are prompted about things often taken for granted. For instance, we are reminded that the reference to Cervantes as "beloved pupil" by López de Hoyos, the Erasmusian principal of the academic institution Cervantes is assumed to have attended in Madrid, is not very studied there for long, even as a very mature student. Again, the tantalizing evidence for and against his being the Miguel de Cervantes

who was sentenced for fighting and wounding one Antonio de Signa in Madrid in September 1569 is carefully weighed, and the verdict given as "not proven". Conditions of life in the *bagno* of Algiers were not so bad as we are disposed to think (whatever the publisher's blurb on the wrapper may suggest). Why did the untricked Dominican, Juan Blanco de Paz, tell us that Cervantes in Algiers, hate him so much? There is no knowing. It is useful to be reminded that the positions of commissary and tax-gatherer were not to be sneezed at by anyone in need of a job. On paper at least, they offered an income and status, not to mention all kinds of pickings for persons less scrupulous than Cervantes. The documents (assuming Astrana Marín did not get things very wrong) do one thing at least: Cervantes comes out indisputably well in those difficult years in his unenviable tasks. It is hard to ascribe the spell of unexplained prosperity in 1589 to anything particularly discreditable. Dr McKendrick accepts it as almost certain that he died on the 22nd, not the 23rd of April, as is traditionally supposed on the basis of the burial certificate. However, she does not mention, as Byron does, that Astrana Marín inconsistently accepts the date of burial certificate as true death dates where others are concerned.

The assertion that "nothing in [Cervantes'] life bears out the distinctive personal promise of the *Leopanto* and *Algarine* years makes one stop and think a little. What opportunity did he have later on for practising leadership and displaying heroism? No doubt, as the author suggests, he could "compensate for the drab reality of his

existence" in the romances and some of the romantic novelle and plays. But *Don Quixote* is different. It springs from conscious reflection on the idea of high adventure trapped in an existence of drab reality. The cool act of self-detachment that was needed to create an original work out of that seems to me worth any amount of heroics.

The total absence of source references is difficult to understand. Presumably this is policy for the series to which the work belongs, the Library of World Biography. It is nonetheless regrettable that the

landscape, the search for signs in anomalous events or coincidences... Or is it, he asks, "that these things still happen, and nobody, no devout and curious monarch, wants to know?"

Dr Christian is faithful to his own injunction to refrain from imposing modern categories upon his material and from testing it against modern issues. Once only — in his account of the events at Almonacid de Zoria in 1566 where, because no one had been hurt when the church floor fell off its hinges on St Blaise's day, it was decided to consecrate that day to the saint — does he allow himself a very comment regarding the powers of inference displayed. Yet, while wishing that it was a longer book, it must also be said that *Local Religion* is really a hefty article which has been bulked out with a profusion of tables, thirty-two in all, many of them relating information which might have been better expressed in prose. As well as tending to obliterate the author's own warnings regarding the valuelessness of his evidence for statistical purposes, they also occupy much space. So too do the lengthy extracts from the *Relaciones* which too often add little to the author's summary of their content. Since his sources are all in print some economy might have been attempted here, if only in order to make room for rather more analysis.

This is particularly required in connection with Christian's confrontation of "local religion" and the "official Church" to whose agents, he insists, the former was impervious. Yet it is by reference to the calendar of the official Church that communities were able to discover which saint they needed to placate, and it was to the local clergy that the Virgin instructed those to whom she appeared to present themselves. Of course, allowance must be made for clerical authorship of accounts of such visions, and some subtlety is needed to separate the strands. Christian's antithesis, however, is too stark, and his conclusion in Chapter Five seems to contradict his argument. Modern scholarship on the role of the laity in the late-medieval

practical utility of a scholarly book should be impaired in this way for other investigators. The blurb contrives to suggest that archival research was involved, but the author makes no such claim. References would also have done a little to obviate the lack of an index. Astrana Marín, of which Dr McKendrick rightly complains. One day someone is going to have to take a look at those documents of his again. However, aside from this deficiency — which will not worry the average reader much — the next British or American biographer of Cervantes will have to work hard to better this one.



Being business

By Richard Rorty

ROGER WATERHOUSE:

A Heidegger Critique. A Critical Examination of the Existential Phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. 239pp. Harvester £18.95. 0 1908 01211 7

For most philosophers in English-speaking countries, Heidegger is the author of *Being and Time* — an "existential phenomenologist" who talked a lot about anxiety and death. Elsewhere in the world, Heidegger is thought of as a writer with a long and difficult *Entwurf*: as someone who quickly abandoned the vocabulary and the programme of his early work in favour of a long series of essays and lectures which gradually worked out a new way of looking at the history of thought, and a new series of questions to ask about the nature of the West. *Being and Time* stands to Heidegger's later work as the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* stands to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and the other later work. If one insists that Heidegger is, before everything else, a "phenomenologist" and on seeing him as a renegade Husserlian, one may be inclined to brush aside the later work as unsystematic and unfavourable. But this is like Russell's dismissive reading of the later Wittgenstein — a reading which assumed that philosophy of language must necessarily consist of worry about the kind of things Frege worried about.

Roger Waterhouse begins his book by saying that "Heidegger freely admitted that his major philosophical debt was to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl". He includes a chapter on Husserl's own thought, and another on Heidegger's collaboration with Husserl. The early expressions of indebtedness to which Waterhouse refers should, however, be read in the light of Heidegger's late "My Way to Phenomenology", which gives a rather different picture. One should also realize that Heidegger almost never uses Husserlian terminology in *Being and Time*, and almost never uses the word "phenomenology" itself after 1930. Although Waterhouse's treatment of Heidegger's intellectual development before *Being and Time* is fuller and more comprehensive than that given in most English-language books on Heidegger, his emphasis on Husserl skews things. Waterhouse rightly says that in the very beginning of *Being and Time* it becomes evident that "Heidegger is leaving Husserl behind". His reader may then be baffled to understand why he had to be told about Husserl at all. There is almost no connection between the discussion of Husserl in Chapters 2-3 of Waterhouse's book and his exegesis of *Being and Time* in Chapters 5-7.

This exegesis tries to cover the

highlights in a few pages each (two pages for "Mund", three for "Death", etc.). It is a good, honest try, but it does not succeed very well. The reader who has not read Heidegger for himself is likely to be baffled rather than intrigued. Waterhouse believes that "it is possible to express his [Heidegger's] insights, arguments, and ways of thinking in relatively simple English". After finishing his excessive success to a chapter on "Heidegger's insights", one of which, he says, is that "knowing is founded upon being". Waterhouse explicates this in a section which includes the following:

The mistake of so many philosophers has been to deny the experience for the sake of the abstract idea. If an experience does not fit with our notions of logic, or rationality, then it is our notions of logic which must give, not the experience. The simple fact is that all our ideas are derived from experience and are intended to make sense of it. If they cease to fit it, they must be discarded or revised.

I think that anybody reading this and similar passages will conclude that Heidegger blends insipidity with unnecessary obscurity. Something like this seems to be Waterhouse's own view, for when he proceeds to his "critique" (Chapters 10-14) his contempt for his subject becomes clear. He concludes one chapter by saying that Heidegger was not doing ontology but "formulating truths about his own experience" and adds: "As was to be expected, his formulations were most illuminating to right-wing, Catholic intellectuals with a background in the *Geisteswissenschaften*". In a chapter on "The Vacuity of Heidegger's Authenticity" a quote from *Being and Time* about "resolute rupture" is glossed "Resolute crap!" Death is disposed of by saying that "attention to ordinary experience will quickly reveal that there is no necessary connection between the thought of death and authenticity".

This is certainly a possible way to read *Being and Time*, though it is hard to reconcile it with Waterhouse's initial attempt to distinguish himself from Heidegger's "dismissive critics". But even if one were to admit that there may be no more to early Heidegger than Waterhouse's more-or-less Marxist reading allows, it would remain hard to excuse his neglect of the later work. He tells us that *Being and Time* anticipated all the major themes of Heidegger's later writings. So, of course, it did, just as the *Tractatus* anticipated all of Wittgenstein's later themes, the first *Critique* all of Kant's, and so on. But Waterhouse turns his back on a distinction drawn by almost all other commentators, and on a lot of plain statements by Heidegger himself, when he says: "I do not see, as certain writers have claimed, a fundamental 'turn' (*Kehre*) in Heidegger's later

work away from Dasein and towards Being". That may not be quite the right way to describe the turn, but there certainly was one. Waterhouse says that "his main interest lies in Heidegger's account of human existence and that... was complete with *Being and Time*". This seems like arguing that Wittgenstein's account of meaning was "complete in the *Tractatus*" on the ground that it is hard to find a "theory of meaning" in his later work.

If Wittgenstein had stopped with the *Tractatus*, that book would now be in historical curiosity, and Wittgenstein's reputation on a par with Neurath's. If Heidegger had stopped with *Being and Time*, we would not now be hearing much about him. It is time for us to stop pretending that he was an *homo unius libri*, and to start reading *Being and Time* as a first, hasty, flawed attempt to say something which only got said much later. Thanks to Glenn Gray, David Krell, Joan Stambaugh, and their collaborators, we now have the bulk of what Heidegger published during his lifetime in careful, readable English translations. We should be making more use of them than we are. Only if we do will we understand why Heidegger looms so large in contemporary French and German thought.

Subject to subject

By Richard Lindley

E. M. BERENSON:

Understanding Persons. Personal and Impersonal Relationships. 198pp. Harvester, £18.95. 0 85327 463 8

Objectivity requires people to assume a detachment from their own locations in the world, and to eliminate perceptual and emotional bias from their judgments. Thus an objective ethic would be one which prohibited people from giving any direct weight to their own personal commitments and relationships; for considered objectively, each person counts for one and not more than one.

Then is a widely held opinion, especially popular in the scientific community, according to which reality is objective, that is to say, any alleged item of knowledge or understanding which is inaccessible to the objective point of view, is illusory. F.M. Berenson challenges this opinion by claiming that there is an irreducibly subjective element within genuine personal understanding. The central theme of this book

concerns the role of subjectivity in the understanding of self and others.

There are three levels of personal understanding. What is required for the first is simply the capacity to distinguish persons from non-persons. The second requires the ability to distinguish between different kinds of people, to "have a concept of what it is for someone to be a person of a particular kind". There is no reason why such knowledge and understanding should not be accessible to someone adopting an objective point of view. The final level of understanding, what Berenson calls "understanding on a deep level" requires the knowing subject to realize what it is like to be the person in question, to have an appreciation of how things feel from just that particular point of view. It is possible to gain this kind of understanding only through involvement in reciprocal personal relationships, which in their nature exclude the attitude of detachment which is required by objectivity.

The personal understanding in which Berenson is interested is real; for there is the possibility of mistakenly seeming to understand at this "deep level" either oneself or another person. "Deep" under-

standing may even be objective in the sense of being in principle communicable to others. It is analogous to understanding a novel, a piece of music, or a joke.

It is not denied that there is a role for detached scientific psychology in the understanding of persons. We are just warned against assuming that scientific psychology and sociology can tell us all we ought to want to know about people. Someone whose understanding of people was limited to truths of the social sciences would be a sadly deficient human being. Such a person might be well advised to read *Understanding Persons*, although, if Dr Berenson is correct, perhaps a visit to a psychotherapist would be more appropriate.

As with a number of interesting works in philosophical psychology the conclusions reached are more appealing than the reasons offered for their favour. Berenson employs three styles of argument in the manner of Merleau-Ponty, in the ordinary language conceptual analysis, and analogical reasoning from literary examples. She is to be commended for this variety, even though there is some cost for the cogency of each individual argument.

By Peter Linehan

WILLIAM A. CHRISTIAN:

Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain. 283pp. Princeton University Press. £10.90. 0 691 05306 5

The purpose of the survey of New Castle ordered by Philip II in the 1570s was to assemble materials for a history of the kingdom based on the answers provided by the oldest and most knowledgeable local inhabitants to a series of specific questions regarding their particular *pueblos*. In the event (of course) the reports were instead quietly filed away in the Escorial. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that scholars began to publish and exploit the so-called *Relaciones topográficas*, and not until 1964 that this remarkable source was accorded systematic attention, by N. Salomon in *La Campaña de Nouvelle Castille à la fin du XVI^e siècle*.

Now William A. Christian has made the replies to the questions concerning chapels, miracles, local holy days and related matters the basis for a study which, though the title promises rather more in terms of geographical coverage than the author delivers, is full of interesting revelations. What Dr Christian insists on calling *local* (rather than *popular*) religion has, in his view, been almost entirely neglected by scholars. The author's ambition is to do for New Castle what others have done for Provence and Florence. Enough can be gleaned from the replies preserved, he suggests, "to gain a fuller sense of the religion of rural people than is known for any Western corner of the time". This raises high hopes, and indeed the material is unusually interesting, for in it, as Christian notes, layman is speaking unto layman. "The villagers describe in a matter-of-fact way spiritual aspects of their civic lives as a landscape overlaid with sacred significance... the people, not the

clergy, speak, and speak with authority."

What these laymen reveal about themselves is in the main unsurprising: theirs was an agricultural society whose round of processions and observances was closely related to the critical periods of the cycle of sowing and reaping. It is the detail regarding these disinter-sensitized communities that is remarkable, the accounts of the circumstances in which they entered into hindling (though renegotiable) agreements — *votos* — with particular saints in order to gain protection against the hazards to which men and their crops were prey: plague, typhus, *caurro*, hailstorms, vine pests and grasshoppers. Choice of advocate fell upon the saint whose day had witnessed a notable disaster (and so evidently needed to be placated), and upon specialist saints. Gregory of Nazianzen was the saint to get in for vine worm, the worms were busy in May when the worms were busy. (There seems to have been something of a confusion of Gregories, but the others proved no less efficacious.) Doctors of the Church in general were highly regarded for this purpose. As late as 1651, all other remedies having failed, a loust trial was conducted by proxies near Segovia at which the prosecutors were the three Saints Gregory, the witnesses called by them the patron saints of a number of villages together with the soul in purgatory, and the full of interesting revelations. What Dr Christian insists on calling *local* (rather than *popular*) religion has, in his view, been almost entirely neglected by scholars. The author's ambition is to do for New Castle what others have done for Provence and Florence. Enough can be gleaned from the replies preserved, he suggests, "to gain a fuller sense of the religion of rural people than is known for any Western corner of the time". This raises high hopes, and indeed the material is unusually interesting, for in it, as Christian notes, layman is speaking unto layman. "The villagers describe in a matter-of-fact way spiritual aspects of their civic lives as a landscape overlaid with sacred significance... the people, not the

prompted by disappointing performance) to Mary, in the guise of benevolent GP. Mary was different, never angry and needing to be placated like the saints. Whereas the villagers made the first move to engage a saint, it was Mary who took the initiative with them, when it suited her, in the form of a gratuitous vision or the discovery of a statue of herself.

As well as of information Philip II was an avid collector of relics. His reign witnessed an enormous influx of them from all over Europe. Together with indulgences, they form the subject of Chapter Four. If the earlier material invites comparison with Keith Thomas's findings, this brief survey provides some useful background to the extraordinary story of the Sacrament forgeries in T. D. Kendrick's *St James in Spain* (1960). Christian, however, ought to have allowed for at least the possibility that some of the king's informants, aware of his cupidity in the matter, may not have given an absolutely exhaustive account of their relic collections.

The efforts of post-Tridentine bishops, as revealed in synodal legisla-

tion, to counter "neopagan popular religiosity", to assert the Church's authority, and to establish official holy-days alongside local variations, are next considered. In Christian's view, success was negligible. Local group loyalties and corporate feelings were too deep-rooted. Lay "spunk" was proof against clerical authority; new theological fashions cut no ice. Indeed, the author suggests, in exercising supervision, the reformers actually strengthened local religion. The continuing vitality of these institutions is considered in a rather scrappy final chapter where the evidence of the 1570s is juxtaposed with information about practices in the 1780s and 1950s to reveal that while regard for the saints and the suffering Christ has declined, Mary has held her own. Improper living standards have put with it, Christian concludes, less gone that other ingredient of local religion, "the sense of divine participation in the

landscape, the search for signs in anomalous events or coincidences... Or is it, he asks, "that these things still happen, and nobody, no devout and curious monarch, wants to know?"

Dr Christian is faithful to his own injunction to refrain from imposing modern categories upon his material and from testing it against modern issues. Once only — in his account of the events at Almonacid de Zoria in 1566 where, because no one had been hurt when the church floor fell off its hinges on St Blaise's day, it was decided to consecrate that day to the saint — does he allow himself a very comment regarding the powers of inference displayed. Yet, while wishing that it was a longer book, it must also be said that *Local Religion* is really a hefty article which has been bulked out with a profusion of tables, thirty-two in all, many of them relating information which might have been better expressed in prose. As well as tending to obliterate the author's own warnings regarding the valuelessness of his evidence for statistical purposes, they also occupy much space. So too do the lengthy extracts from the *Relaciones* which too often add little to the author's summary of their content. Since his sources are all in print some economy might have been attempted here, if only in order to make room for rather more analysis.

This is particularly required in connection with Christian's confrontation of "local religion" and the "official Church" to whose agents, he insists, the former was impervious. Yet it is by reference to the calendar of the official Church that communities were able to discover which saint they needed to placate, and it was to the local clergy that the Virgin instructed those to whom she appeared to present themselves. Of course, allowance must be made for clerical authorship of accounts of such visions, and some subtlety is needed to separate the strands. Christian's antithesis, however, is too stark, and his conclusion in Chapter Five seems to contradict his argument. Modern scholarship on the role of the laity in the late-medieval

Church, and notably its sacramental aspect, could be used to supplement the memories of Christian's utopianism. Reference to just one of John Bussy's articles and a general invocation of *Religion and the Decline of Magic* is hardly enough.

Nor have Spanish historians exhibited quite so little interest in "local religion" as the author suggests. In company with other historians, he insists on that terminology and questions the idea of popular religion since "all the evidence indicates that the kind of local religion described was shared by most of the people of Madrid and Toledo... and was as characteristic of the royal family as it was of untutored peasants." Where is this evidence? Christian's own pages on Toledo point in the other direction and seem fully to justify making a distinction between "peasant cities" and "urbanlike villages", however we describe the religious activity to be encountered there. References to "Franciscan monasticism" and the attribution to Clement VI of an indulgence "dated era of 1353" suggest a rather hazy acquaintance with earlier peninsular history, but there some of the origins of the "stubborn, combative laity" might be found. Allowance must be made for the relics brought to Spain from Byzantium after 1204. Spain south of the Tagus did not have to be relentless for want of supplies, as Christian supposes. But if it was so, then why was it? Certainly not for lack of Spaniards at home, who were far from being newcomers there in the sixteenth century. Such reservations aside, however, this suggestive study opens some new perspectives to scholars working on either side of that discredited divide, 1492, the year in which the oldest of Dr Christian's revealing informants were born.

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Civilizing influences

By Percy M. Young

DAVID F. PRICE

Patrons and Musicians of the English Renaissance
250pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50.
0 521 22806 9

"How, we ask, as we slither over the pages, can we ever hope to come to grips with the Elizabethans?" So once misused Virginia Woolf. Moving from letters to music – or, more pertinently in the present context, to music and letters – a sense of disoriental heights. The idea that Ministers of the Crown, for instance, were not only musically literate, but also of the opinion that a proper education required the employment of personal instrumental teachers, is so far from today's policies and practices that one must hope that David F. Price's book will find its way into governing hands.

To the Elizabethans and Jacobians, music was a sort of elixir that helped to make life worth living; it even made death worth dying. So in his Act of *Divine Meditation*, Edmund Spenser re-created a Mr Eske, a minister who "all on a sudden was so strangely transported with the thoughts of the joys of Heaven, that he said with a great deal of passion, *What Musick! Sin, shall there be in heaven? O the spiritual joy and melody that there shall have*". Eske was a Puritan, whose theology would allow that perfection in music (as in all things) was to be experienced only posthumously. Definitive editions

and hi-fi have shortened the musical pilgrim's progress, so that recordings of madrigals, motets, virginals, and consort music may now seem to provide an earthly paradise.

Mr Price's book is a splendid corrective to the sentimental approach which may not only affect the reading of musical history but also standards of performance. He studies the economics and politics of one area of social activity (that within sight of others), towards which principles inherent in a general system of values directed the attention of those who aspired to power. From Elyot's *The Governour*, of 1531, to Peacham's *Companion for Gentlemen*, published ninety years later, a splendid consensus obtained, which put into the conceptual apparatus of the time the idea that the governor should be a gentleman; more than that (and however the definition is interpreted), he should be an educated gentleman. On the whole – as Thomas Morley and Nicholas Yonge testified – neither the aristocratic countryman nor the city gentleman would have failed an examination in musical appreciation.

Secularization of the idea of the ineffable excellence of music took place after, and in no small measure in consequence of, the dissolution of the monasteries. Techniques passed over from motet to madrigal, and were improved by exposure to Italian and Flemish influences through the importation of music and musicians. The leud was given by the Tudor court, whose lavish expenditure on music and pageantry was a general inspiration; so that in particular hard times the level of unemployment was kept down by wide-spread patronage. Investment in

music by a number of the most powerful families in the land – the Percys, Talbots, Cavendishes, Kysens, Howards, Somersets, Cecils and Dudleys – is described by Price in detail after thorough scrutiny of the respective household accounts. The evidence assembled shows how standards of musical literacy were raised throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. More than any other factor, perhaps, this was responsible for the explosion of part-song composition that characterized the period and (since part-singing happily continued from then till now) furnished the essential features of a native musical culture.

The place of the musician within the sixteenth-century framework is made abundantly clear. Sometimes driven into private employment by reasons of fluctuation in ecclesiastical patronage, or accepting it as a convenient way of professional advancement, he came to serve a variety of functions: as teacher, as performer, as general factotum, as a disposable asset – a well-developed transfer system existed – even as family friend and confidant. In general, the household musician was a gentleman's gentleman. The role of musician could, however, cover other functions. Thomas Morley was not the only musician who was a secret service agent but, according to Price, he could have been more fashionably a double agent. Otherwise, there were sympathetic families who maintained Catholic priests ostensibly as music teachers, and sometimes they were reported to the Government for so doing.

A particularly illuminating section of

Price's book concerns the tenacity of the leading Catholic households not only in protecting their faith but also music and musicians as a vital means of preserving that faith. Above all this used the masterful figure of William Byrd, whose reputation – secured by his status of near equality with the political eminences and by the favour of Queen Elizabeth – was unassailable. But the hard-line Protestants – the Dudleys and the Cecils, for example – while preferring the doctrinal manifest to the metrical psalm to that in the Latin Mass or motet, appreciated the advantages that derived from ostentatious patronage, particularly on the vulgar scale of the Kenilworth Entertainment of 1575.

The regions studied in detail here are in those parts of England which are still, for the most part, the most prosperous today. But in the North there were families sometimes of more local than national importance – Stanleys, Shuttleworths, Leggs, Heskeths, Ashtons, among them – whose style of patronage needs to be reviewed in considering the whole scene. While patronage in general was private rather than public, there were bodies of civic musicians – the town wals who were

often hired by northern households for special occasions – who bridged social divisions, by accumulating themselves to the gentry on the one hand and to the commonality on the other.

Renaissance England was a small world, and Mr Price gives a clear view of one part of it. Only once does he seem to fall for the Elizabethan tendency to hyperbole that caused Virginia Woolf to wonder how people at that time actually addressed each other. An organ, admittedly described as "huge", built for the Cecils at Hatfield, was reported to have cost "one thousand and sixty pounds"; a few years later Dallam's famous organ at York cost £297. The book is elegantly produced through "Edward" Spencer and Bishop's "Storford" have somehow slipped into the bibliographic detail, and contains maps, genealogical tables, and illustrations. And Mr Price occasionally shows a nice dry humour: eg, the artist cooperated with the patron "under the conditions of the management – rarely under those of the union". Even if the contemporary term now is sponsor rather than patron, it cannot be said that the relationship has greatly altered.

Appropriate feelings

By Malcolm Budd

PETER KIVY

The Corded Shell
Reflections on Musical Expression
167pp. Princeton University Press.
£8.40 (paperback, £3.35).
0 691 07258 2

Elgar's *Suspense* expresses a mood of profound sorrow and a sense of irreparable loss; the opening of Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony is imbued with *joie de vivre*; the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is suffused with yearning. How are such remarks to be understood? Do they voice merely subjective responses? Or are there intersubjective criteria for the characterization of music by emotive terms? What is the aesthetic significance of hearing music as expressive of emotion? Are the emotions that we hear in a piece of music integral to the value that the music has for us as music?

Peter Kivy attempts to answer such questions as these by developing a theory of musical expressiveness which is based upon insights that he gleaned from consideration of various writers on music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He proposes two models of musical expressiveness: the "contour" model and the "convention" model. The contour model accounts for the expressiveness of music in terms of resemblances between structural features of a musical passage and features of the expression of emotion in human utterance and behaviour. The convention model explains the expressiveness of a particular piece of music as a function of the customary association of certain features of the piece with other music that is expressive of the emotion. The contour model, therefore, could not stand alone since it presupposes an alternative model of musical expressiveness. Kivy's thesis is that these two models together account for the central cases of the musical expression of emotion. The expressiveness of a passage may be due entirely to the congruence of the musical contour and the expressive contour of the impassioned human voice and body, or entirely to customary association, or partly to the one and partly to the other. It follows that the characterization of music by emotive terms is not a merely subjective matter.

There is much that is valuable in Kivy's book. He writes interestingly about problems involved in understanding the expressiveness of music of an alien culture and about the setting of words to music. But his theory of musical expressiveness is seriously incomplete. It is an acceptable outline of at least some of the features of music by virtue of which a passage may be said to be expressive of a certain emotion. But it does not make clear the nature of either the experience, or the character-

ization, of music as expressive of emotion. We are often told that the *contour model* to perceive the expressiveness of a piece of music is to perceive some similarity between the music and characteristic features of the human expression of emotion. But the perception of such a resemblance is not in fact sufficient to experience the expressiveness of music, and it is not required by Kivy where the expressiveness of music can be accounted for by the convention model. Whether in particular cases the expressiveness of music is due to, or can be accounted for by, a resemblance in contour, a customary association, or both, the experience of hearing music to be expressive of joy is constant for different pieces and the characterization of music as joyful has a unitary sense. But what is this experience and what is this characterization?

In Kivy's discussion of the contour model two accounts of the experience of hearing emotion in music are adumbrated although not clearly distinguished. The first makes use of the idea of something's being "appropriate" to the non-artistic expression of an emotion. It claims that someone hears a piece of music as expressive of grief if and only if he experiences it as appropriate to the expression of grief in and through the human body. And a person experiences music as appropriate to the expression of grief if, for example, he hears it as resembling the rise and fall of the human voice in impassioned speech that expresses grief.

The second account exploits the fact that we can regard an object as something we know it not to be. A child can make-believe that a wooden artefact is a baby. In the marks on the canvas of a representational painting we can see an object represented. Just so, Kivy claims, we can "animate" music: we can hear music as speech, utterance, gesture or bodily movement. To hear music as expressive of grief is, according to this account, to hear it as someone's vocal or bodily expression of grief. We must hear music as a vehicle of expression that really does qualify or issue from the human body if we are to hear music's expressiveness.

Neither of these accounts is developed. In particular, the precise sense in which we are supposed to animate music when we experience it as expressive is not made clear. Reference to make-believe and the seeing of pictorial representations is merely suggestive. In consequence Kivy's book does not contain a satisfactory theory of musical expressiveness. And without such a theory he is not well placed to explain why it is that the possession by a musical work of expressive properties is a merit of the work. He successfully defends the view that the expressive features of a piece of music are relevant to the favourable evaluation of the music, but he is not in a position to answer the question that he himself poses: What is good about a theme's being cheerful?

The long arm of DINA

By Malcolm Deas

JOHN DINGES and SAUL LANDAU:
Assassination on Embassy Row
411pp. Writers and Readers Publishing
Cooperative, £6.95.
0 906495 43 1

The "assassination on Embassy Row" was that of the exiled Chilean socialist leader Orlando Letelier, who was murdered by a bomb placed in his car in Washington. The American wife of his assistant also died in the explosion of September 21, 1976. *Assassination on Embassy Row* is an account of how the killing was planned and executed, written by a friend and colleague of Letelier's exile and by a former *Washington Post and Times* correspondent in Chile.

Letelier was killed by an agent of DINA, the Chilean secret police, who had previously murdered General Prats in Buenos Aires and barely missed killing the Christian Democrat Bernardo Leighton in Rome. The same agent, the American Michael Townley, was involved in all three cases. The last he carried out in collaboration with Cuban nationalists, whose propensity to help in the violence of others in return for nebulous promises of future aid and comfort for their own ends makes them a reservoir of mercenary criminals, ready to go because they have nowhere to go, and because they are not quite entirely mercenary. The orders for the "mission" came from General Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, the head of DINA, and whence he got his orders there is no knowing. The United States has not succeeded in extraditing him. As he is the former head of the secret service of a government which the United States' own CIA assisted to power, that is not surprising. As this book points out, General Pinochet might riposte by requesting Richard Helms' extradition to help clear up the death of General Schneider in 1970. Things have to stop somewhere.

John Dinges and Saul Landau have written an account of how Letelier was assassinated. They are exponents of the "new journalism" which does not spare detail. We are told how many pages of coffee people have for breakfast, compared with more straightforward scholarship, are that it does not give authorities for its statements in a precise enough fashion, that it cannot

see the difference between an important fact and an unimportant one, that it goes on for too long and, at the end, is incapable of delivering a satisfactory explanation of why things occur. To take an example from the *Journal of "new journalism"* (and another case where the criminal infamy was Chilean suicide), Watergate: why they raided that hotel, why Mr Nixon wished to tape absolutely everything, why his friends and subordinates were the sort of people they were, are questions all too easily lost in paragraphs that open with precise times, are decorated with seemingly authentic vignettes, and which cut from face to face, place to place like a film script. Mr Landau makes films. There is a rumour that they are going to make a film of this work, which will show a Ciber audience how experts were once writing in concluding that "the reach of DINA almost certainly (100%) does not extend to the United States".

This will only show how Letelier was killed, not why. It will show the technique of placing a bomb and detonating it with a converted bleeper, a murder that shocks the more immediately because it took place in the heart of Washington, because it was carried out by a foreign governmental agency and because one of its victims was a prominent Chilean exile. A change of venue, of assassin and victims – in assassination, we do send to ask for whom the bell tolls – and we might concentrate more on causes and less on the enormity of the act. This book is a convincingly detailed account both of the killing and of the investigation and trial that are themselves investigated and tried by the authors to see how much America and her agencies have pulled together again since Watergate and the departures of J. Edgar Hoover, Dr Kissinger and Mr Helms. But beyond that it is, as befits a memorial, sentimental.

Orlando Letelier had charm, intelligence and courage. He seems also to have been a high-living cosmopolitan internationalist and socialist. The authors of this book do not convince me that Letelier turned down an offer of a job from "Che" Guevara to help "direct" the Cuban economy because he felt that he could help Latin America more from a position in the Inter-American Development Bank with Felipe Herrera. There were differences in pay and conditions and prospects, as well as in the level of economic competence. Letelier spent most of his working life outside Chile; as the books says, this made him,

through his contacts and support, a more dangerous enemy to the military government than other more Chilean figures. It also exposes a less attractive side of Chilean socialism and the United Popular: the enormous number of highly paid international communists in its ranks and among its advisers who had never been truly responsible for anything, not even their own opinions. It was in some ways a bad day for Chile when the Economic Commission for Latin America was housed in Santiago.

The events in this book originate, like so many other horrors, in the politics of the southern countries of South America in the early 1970s, and it is time to think again about those politics, perhaps even to admit that European and North American romanticism who flattered so many local illusions should bear some of the blame for what happened. There was more wrong with the scheme than just the presence of the last Prussian army left in the world, waiting in the wings: that is not the only reason that General Pinochet is in power. Exile stops the clocks of all but the ablest politicians. One cannot tell from this book how his experience of the coup and imprisonment on Dawson Island affected Letelier's thinking. In exile he liked the United States, because he felt safe there and at home. His party, however,

liked holding their meetings in Cuba, because security was better. The contradictions are obvious, and it seems typical of sympathizers with Unidad Popular to ignore them.

Chile is a country bedevilled by fashionableness, by a need to be in the vanguard of something, by ideological obsessions. This has not changed since 1973, and even if the insensible General Pinochet himself has no such weakness, his entourage certainly does. So do lesser figures, such as Michael Townley the assassin, who unlike the interminably sentenced Cubans is any time now due for a release stipulated in his plea-bargain, and a new life under yet another identity. Unlike most of the foreign romanticism present in Allende's Chile, Townley did not hail the Chilean Road to Socialism. He and his Chilean wife joined Patria y Libertad, the militant right-wing of a country not his own, and later its national security agency. DINA under General Contreras was both nationalist and unprincipled; it did not want any foreign approval, it wanted "results". Townley was a gifted uninitiate in electronics, radio and bombs. He also had his limited imagination, one that fed on having a commission in a secret army; he was an intelligence and assassination buff, as the Americans might have put it. He entered a world where vocabulary and

Battle of the robots

By Noble Frankland

NORMAN LONGMATE

The Doodlebugs
The Story of the Flying-Bomb
548pp. Hutchinson, £12.95.
0 09 144750 X

The pilotless planes, robots, flying bombs, V1s or Doodlebugs, as they were variously called, killed and injured 6,000 British civilians and just under 3,000 servicemen. The counter-measures aimed at stopping them cost the lives of 2,900 Allied airmen, mostly of the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command. Missiles and the like cost the Germans only 185 lives. For the equivalent of every point which the Germans scored on projecting the V1s in England, the British (and the Americans) spent five pounds in trying to stop them doing so. The campaign began in June 1944 and was largely over by September, though small-scale attacks lasted nearly to the end of the war in May 1945. Londoners, who received about forty per cent of all the bombs which got through, were the chief victims, but life was also uncomfortable in Kent and Sussex or "Doodlebug Alley" as it was known.

Certainly the Germans scored a point with this new weapon. Despite the advance warning which British Intelligence and photographic reconnaissance gave, it took the defences a long time to get on top of the threat and the counter-measures, as the Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, Sir Arthur Harris, predicted, proved to be largely ineffective.

Who then was the victor in the campaign? The answer to that question is perhaps the only point upon which Norman Longmate is not quite clear or, to be more precise, not quite convincing. In a study otherwise notable for the lucidity of its expression and the comprehensiveness of its coverage. In truth, as the Battle of Britain, it was the Germans who carried the day but the British who gained the advantage. The V1 campaign failed to disrupt the invasion of Normandy or the relentless, though disappointingly slow, advance of General Eisenhower's armies to the centre of Germany. Though it did momentarily raise German spirits, it failed to have any marked or lasting effect there too. In fact, the V1s were

too few and too late to make any significant difference, except of course, to those they killed, maimed or in other ways deprived. Yet the V1 campaign, or "Cruisshow" as the British called it, is a fascinating subject well worth the labour, skill and understanding which Mr Longmate has so amply devoted to it.

For those with their own memories of the V1 the book will be riveting and I suspect that few will find a false note struck in it. I myself recall quite clearly watching the things come down in London and, in great numbers, in the fields of Sussex, and I remember one hitting Brill Hill not far from Oxford, which must have been an "over" probably individually investigated, though not actually mentioned, by Mr Longmate. I also remember navigating a Lancaster in bombing attacks on the launching ramps in the Pas de Calais and, most particularly, the underground V1 storage depot at St Leu d'Esserent. On the basis of those three viewpoints, I can assure readers of this book, who perhaps may have no personal experience of the events, that Longmate points not merely a convincing, but also a true picture. He understands the facts and senses the atmosphere. He has had the patience, perseverance and sensitivity to understand the times of which he writes and he communicates all in an easily readable form. Though the pages go past effortlessly the book is scholarly in the sense that its words are minutely adjusted to the evidence upon which it is founded and the evidence, though agreeably unobtrusive, is fully paraded for those who want it.

Much of what is nowadays written about the Second World War, reflecting, as is natural, the reaction of succeeding generations, is imbued with prejudices and passions, not of the war years, but of the present age. Longmate is delightfully and most refreshingly free from this fault. In describing the highly important role of Herbert Morrison, for example, he gives full credit where credit is due and also mentions that Morrison suggested that, as a deterrent to V1 launches, the Pas de Calais should be drenched with poison gas. To the reminder that the Pas de Calais was full of Frenchmen, Morrison responded with the observation that they had no money to buy German armaments, the parts played in the battle against the V1s by Fighter Com-

mand (at the time barbarously renamed Air Defence of Great Britain) and the anti-aircraft gunners, he shows how the rivalry between those who fought on the ground and in the air sometimes took on the characteristics of class warfare; but he avoids the Len Deighton syndrome of crystallizing this kind of issue around who had or had not been to a public school. In describing Bomber Command's use in the campaign, he shows how the selective attack on the Bennevide and the precision bombing of the launching ramps in the Pas de Calais had a barely perceptible effect upon the schedule of development and, when it was developed, the firing of the V1. He does show, however, that the routine general-area bombing of Kassel on October 22, 1943, seriously dislocated the production of the V1s and delayed their operational introduction, in mentioning the role of "Ultras" in the campaign, he claims no more than that from time to time it afforded some useful confirmatory evidence. He is kinder than most to the contribution of Lord Duncan-Sandys, to whom Churchill gave ministerial responsibility for the national reaction to the rumour and later the actuality of the V-weapons threat, and he is not entirely blinded by the dazzling deductions of R. V. Jones.

Such unfashionable revelations and reactions on the part of Mr Longmate show that he is after the truth and not the embellishment of a myth. As generally happens when this is the case, a study which is ostensibly about a specialized aspect of a subject reveals insights into much larger areas of understanding. Here there is primary evidence as to how governments, military commanders, local authorities and ordinary people react to new and almost unthought-of threats, as well as to the distinctive temperaments of town and country dwellers and the differing priorities of men and women. Some strange ironies are also revealed. The strangest of all must surely be that the most misanthropic of weapons, known indeed as a Robot, did after all offer its potential victims an opportunity of saving themselves, and the ways in which people learnt to dodge the Doodlebugs was a factor not all that much less important than the eventual success of the coastal anti-aircraft guns, aided and abetted by the latest radar and the proximity fuse.

Peckings from the tombs

By Stuart Piggott

THE MEGALITHIC ART OF WESTERN EUROPE
250pp with 200 line drawings and 15 plates. Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, £50.
0 19 81 0752 2

The current popularization of archaeology for what passes for anthropology has rendered "megalithic" a magic word, comforting or exciting according to the reader's temperament: comforting when it is believed to be understood, exciting when it hints at ancient mysteries. Add to this "art", by implication primitive and ethnic, potential gratification is complete. I am delighted to say that this work of exact and patient scholarship, and restrained and judicious interpretation, completely fails to fulfill any of these romantic expectations, but instead provides archaeologists with an objective corpus of important primary material which has never before been brought together in coherent form.

What have we got in this volume? With dates provided by radiocarbon and thermoluminescent dating and

the dendrochronological calibration of the timber, we are given a time period from about 3500 to 2000 BC, early agricultural stone-using societies. In Western Europe, "megalithic" is a magic word, comforting or exciting according to the reader's temperament: comforting when it is believed to be understood, exciting when it hints at ancient mysteries. Add to this "art", by implication primitive and ethnic, potential gratification is complete. I am delighted to say that this work of exact and patient scholarship, and restrained and judicious interpretation, completely fails to fulfill any of these romantic expectations, but instead provides archaeologists with an objective corpus of important primary material which has never before been brought together in coherent form.

Superficially similar large stone structures for funerary and ritual purposes can be found widely distributed in time and place over large tracts of the Old World, and form the basis of interpretation, completely fails to fulfill any of these romantic expectations, but instead provides archaeologists with an objective corpus of important primary material which has never before been brought together in coherent form.

Life on the mound

By Roland Oliver

GRAHAM UNNIAH:
Three Thousand Years in Africa
Man and His Environment in the Lake Chad Region of Nigeria
205pp. Cambridge University Press, £25.
0 521 22848 4

For the past decade two archaeological sites have dominated discussion about the origins of cereal food production in the West African savanna belt between the desert in the north and the equatorial woodlands in the south. The first is the site at Tichit in southern Mauritania, where Patrick Munson was able to define eight successive phases of occupation, running from about 1500 to about 300 BC, in which it was possible to see the whole course of development from purely pastoral food production, accompanied by the gathering of wild cereals, to a situation where stock farming was combined with the intensive cultivation of hillside millet in elaborately defended village settlements. The second site is the great mound at Dainu in north-eastern Nigeria, which will always be associated with the name of its excavator, Graham Connah. The evidence from Dainu, taken together with that from another mound in the same general area, showed a strong probability that cereal food production, in this case of sorghum, had been practised along with mixed husbandry from the late second millennium BC. So far, Connah has published his results only in articles. Now, some fifteen years after the event, he has produced a slim but useful volume, of which the core is devoted to Dainu and the rest to placing the evidence from this site in perspective against the known history of the Borno region of Nigeria.

Dainu, after all, is only one large example of some hundreds of mound-like mounds which litter the seasonally inundated clay plains to the south and west of Lake Chad, and which result from the need of a whole population to concentrate their settlements upon the limited number of sandy spits that rise above the clay. Like the tells of western Asia, the mounds then rose gradually through time, as new building was carried out upon the rubble of the old. In the Chad lakeinead settlement could begin only with the final retreat of the waters following the last phase of humid climate during the third and second millennia BC. Population flowed in around a contracting shoreline and almost certainly it came from the north-west, where pastoralist speaking Chadic languages remotely related to Berber were being squeezed out of a steadily desiccating Sahara. Probably,

the earliest settlers brought domesticated sorghum with them as well as stock. Dainu is certainly not the oldest of the mound settlements, but it has yielded evidence of continuous occupation for about 1,800 years, from the sixth century AD until the nineteenth century AD. It thus offers a precious means of control. Adding what is known from other sites, it may be said that for most, if not all, of the first millennium BC the peoples of the Chad lakeinead lived without metals. Even their stone was imported, and they therefore made use of their tools as portable out of metal bone. And, as has been pointed out, agriculture. Houses were made of poles and thatch. In contrast, during the first seven or so centuries AD stone tools were replaced by iron, agriculture grew at the expense of stock-raising, and houses were built with thick walls of mud. From the eighth century onwards the settlement reached urban proportions and there was a noticeable enrichment of the whole deposit. Spindle-whorls attest the advent of cotton clothing. Burials were accompanied by gold grave goods, and there was a large increase of imported items, particularly of those made of bronze, glass and coral.

Economic prosperity, population growth and increasing communication with the outside world also brought new dangers. A number of the mound sites were surrounded in the later stages by their development by defensive earth-works, which probably betoken the presence of horse-borne slave-raiders from outside the immediate neighbourhood. Certainly by the fourteenth century the kingdom of Kanem, with its powerful armies of cavalry and foot, was beginning to intrude into the territory of the mound-dwellers, partly in wars of outright conquest, but even more in regular, dry-season, slave-raiding expeditions of the kind which were graphically described by the Borno chronicler, Ibn Battuta, in the sixteenth century and again by Barth in the nineteenth.

Trying to look beyond the surface scene of horrifying violence, endlessly renewed, the long-term effect of Borno warfare was the relentless, creeping Kamirization of all the more accessible islands of the lakeinead. Only the islands of the lake itself, and a few isolated communities around its southern shores, remained Chadic-speaking. During this period the centre of archaeological, as also of historical, interest shifts to the metropolitan area of the Borno kingdom, at Gzargana, Gamir and a few other brick-built urban sites in the north-west of the older lakeinead mounds, where investigations have so far been taken little further than surface survey.

The main pity of this book is that it fails to discuss in more than the most cursory way the archaeology of southern

Chad and northern Cameroun, where the data are so very similar. It is true that Chad has not been in recent years the easiest country for scholars to visit. It is also true that much of the work done there during colonial times was not of a highly professional standard, and that most of it was done before the days of radio-carbon dating. Nevertheless, the literature is extensive. Sites and finds are fairly fully described, and the background evidence of ethnography and linguistics is adequately known. And the crucial fact is that the southern sites were far enough from the destructive influence of Borno for earlier patterns of settlement and material culture to have survived into the modern period. In a work of reflection and synthesis this part of the region should surely not have been so nearly ignored.

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Bulgaria before the Bulgars

By Andrew Sherratt

R. F. HODDINOTT:
The Thracians
102pp with 168 illustrations. Thames and Hudson, £12.
0 500 02099 X

The Thracians bear the same relationship to the modern peoples of south-east Europe that the ancient Celts do to us. Although the present populations of Britain and Bulgaria are the physical descendants of these earlier peoples, they have been cut off from their culturally and linguistically by later invasions - in our case of the Saxons and Normans. In theirs the Slavs and Bulgars. Yet while the Celtic fringe of these islands preserves a thread of continuity with our Iron Age ancestors, the Thracians have everywhere disappeared. Their language, preserved only in occasional words, provides no rallying-point for Balkan minorities. Their character is known to us only from the ethnocentric accounts of ancient writers from lands further south, and from the material evidence of archaeology.

Although the Roman province of Thracia as it was defined by Diocletian coincides largely with modern Bulgaria (and Sofia maintains an "Institute of Thracology" while Belgrade must make do with a more eclectic "Institute of Balkanology"), the cultural and ethnic region of the early Thracians was much larger, and covered Romania, eastern Hungary, northern Greece and parts of southern Russia. A closer definition would be self-defeating, however, since to trace the boundaries of an unwritten ancient language is an im-

possible task. The unity of the Thracian people was their political history; their reaction to the Classical world and the formation of native states. In this they were part of a broad area of "barbarian" peoples, from the Celts in the west to the Scythians in the east, which came under the influence of (and were in a sense created by) the expansion of the Mediterranean powers. This growing unity and assertiveness of the tribes of the interior as a result of these northwards contacts and trade resulted in the process of "ethnogenesis" - the emergence of self-conscious ethnic units on the first steps of the road to nationhood.

There is a difficulty here that R. F. Hoddinott does not entirely avoid. In contributing to a series whose general title is "Ancient Peoples and Places", the author may choose to define his topic by ethnicity or by locality. The present volume does both: it deals equally with the Thracian communities of the Iron Age, and the prehistoric inhabitants of the Thracian lands. While the tracing of roots is a fascinating exercise, it should be remembered that the Neolithic and Bronze Age populations of Bulgaria were "Thracian" only in the sense in which Sir Arthur Keith was able to refer to Piltown Munns - the earliest Englishman. To claim a Thracian contribution to the foundation of Troy as Mr Hoddinott does is to confuse geography with politics. This distinction is the key both to the success and failure of the book.

No one who has grappled with the prehistory of this region can fail to be impressed by the author's familiarity with the literature of half-a-dozen countries, spanning both the fully prehistoric period and the twilight world partly illuminated by Classical descriptions of the northern territories.

What we are dealing with, of course, are the symbols of religions and cults in the fourth and third millennia BC, and always will be, unknown to us. The restricted series of anthropomorphic carvings, often female, have however always attracted the imagination of those who find this honestly negative attitude emotionally unengaging, and fantasy has followed. Dr. Hoddinott's book brings a refreshing end of common-sense into the last-house realms of the Mother Goddess, and one hopes that many luxuriant evocative will wither and shrivel to death at last. As she says, "there is undeniable evidence of some sort of cult of a figure in the late Neolithic of western Europe, and that the figure was usually female" and that "the term 'deity' probably comes closest to indicating what these figures 'signified' for those who carved and saw them".

The Clarendon Press is to be congratulated on publishing this basic corpus of evidence amply and handsomely, with its synthesis, catalogue and 280 line and forty-five half-tone plates illustrating every example. At present rates one can easily be asked its price for a couple of books of second-hand derivative or even dubious scholarship. Apart from its value as a fundamental tool of research, it may show the interested public that there is more to archaeology than excavation and spectacular finds made with metal detectors. Megalithic tombs still present many problems not only of origins, but of contact and interchange among the communities who built them, and to assess these factors we need complete statements of evidence such as we now have for their decorative art.

Equally, his first-hand knowledge of the terrain is evident both from the book's descriptions and its photographs. As a wide-ranging review of the archaeology of this area it has few competitors. Even where Hoddinott's interpretations may be questioned, he is undoubtedly well-informed. The book is an excellent starting-point for the exploration of south-east European prehistory.

Nevertheless the volume falls into two parts of unequal value. The later section, with a historical framework to structure archaeological observations, offers an integrated narrative of material and events. The earlier part, dealing with the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, adopts too easily the style of protohistory, with its trail of invasions and refugees, implausible influences and inheritances. The temptation to apply the techniques of the iconographer to this more enigmatic material can result in a confident but unjustified attribution of symbolic meaning to what might otherwise be seen as bell-hooks (fig 47), pot-handles (fig 141) and weaving tools (fig 191).

Finally, some comment is required on the format of the book. As one of the new style of volumes in this series, the layout and treatment of illustrations fall short of the standards set in the earlier style. The influence of the "coffee-table" layouts is evident in the desire to integrate text and illustrations, but the means adopted are crude. The great variety of sizes and styles of visual presentation is unsatisfactory, while the device of using a wide margin for small pictures and captions is inappropriate for the size of page. The earlier formula of uniformly redrawn text figures and grouped photograph plates was a classic of its kind. The present compromise is an unworthy successor.

Speaking without saying

By Bryan Wilson

CYRIL G. WILLIAMS:
Tongues of the Spirit
A Study of Pentecostal Glossolalia and Related Phenomena
276pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, £15.95.
0 7083 0752 2

Until the emergence of the Charismatic Renewal movement, which began in California in the late 1950s, glossolalia was a generally discredited phenomenon among Christians, both laymen and theologians alike. The material available on the subject came largely from writers committed to one or other of the Pentecostal denominations and sects, and most of them made up in fervour what they lacked in the apparatus of objective scholarship or theological sophistication. Outside the Pentecostal fold, the movement was decided by other Christians, and the practice of speaking in tongues was regarded by church people, no less than by the earlier psychological commentators, as tantamount to a form of mental aberration. Much of that psychological writing was by investigators with limited first-hand acquaintance with glossolalia, and this must have been even more true for such theologians as wrestled with the scriptural problems arising from the accounts of Luke and Paul that relate to speaking in tongues, and the promise of the gifts of the Spirit.

Since the spread of the Charismatic Renewal movement, and the growth in influence of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (which was founded in 1953, and which was, from its origins, committed to Pentecostalism), glossolalia has become a widespread phenomenon in Christian churches and in the interdenominational prayer meetings that have grown up especially to cultivate this type of ecstatic experience. Millions of Christians have now heard people speaking

in tongues, and a not inconsiderable proportion of members of most of the denominations (including Roman Catholics) have, in some countries, particularly the United States, spoken in tongues themselves. The subject has, in consequence, become a popular field for psychological, sociological, and theological enquiry. There is a burgeoning literature on the subject, particularly on the psychological aspects of glossolalia. Rarely are the psychological, social, and theological issues considered in relation to each other.

Cyril G. Williams, who writes primarily as a theologian, has done just that, however, and has further set the whole question of glossolalia into the context of a historical account of the rise of what are now sometimes called the sects of "classical Pentecostalism" movements such as the Assemblies of God, the various movements taking the designation Church of God, and, in Britain, the Elim Church and the Apostolic Church. Bringing his account more fully up to date, he has also traced the history of the amorphous Charismatic Renewal movement, from its beginnings among Episcopalians to its impact on the Roman Catholic and other churches. The history has, of course, been done before, but nowhere with so acute and interdisciplinary an eye for the implications of speaking in tongues and the associated gifts of the Spirit. Professor Williams contends, indeed, that the theological discussion of these phenomena cannot be adequately pursued without taking into account the psychological and sociological aspects.

The non-theological reader may be put off by the way in which he plunges directly into scholarly dispute about the ecstatic elements of Old Testament prophecy, almost as if ecstasy existed only as a refraction of scholarly argument, and further by the acknowledged fact that the Old Testament records no actual instance of speaking in tongues to the sense in which the term glossolalia is employed. The New Testament is the locus classicus for

modern-day Pentecostals, of course, but even here, just what occurred at Pentecost is subject to diverse interpretations. The traditional view was that, while at Corinth glossolalia had occurred, meaning that there were lexically non-communicative utterances, at Pentecost what occurred was xenoglossia, utterance in an actual foreign language.

Modern Pentecostals have often been content with that distinction, and in the early days of the movement, some believed that the Spirit had actually endowed them with an instantaneous ability to speak in foreign languages, and there are hazy and perhaps apocryphal stories told to amuse audiences of the faithful that some actually went off in the mission field believing they had a special linguistic gift of the Spirit intended as an aid to preaching. Williams dismisses the arguments for xenoglossia, however, and believes that what happened at the first Pentecost was a phenomenon entirely comparable to modern speaking in tongues, and that it was speech not directed to the auditors but rather to God.

Speaking in tongues did not, of course, lapse between apostolic times and the outburst of modern Pentecostalism, which is generally traced to a holiness meeting in Topeka, Kansas in 1900, even though it became a common orthodox position to maintain that the gifts of the Spirit were not operative after the time of the apostles. Williams lists briefly the movements and occasions when such phenomena reputedly occurred. Evidence is often disputed. Did glossolalia occur in the Welsh Revival of 1904-5? By this time, revivalist congregations were literate and there was a widely disseminated religious press, which undoubtedly contributed to the spread of glossolalia from the United States. The evidence for Wales is, however, slim, and Williams dismisses it. He does, however, point to some perhaps not unrelated speech phenomena that occur in worship in Wales, the development of a special song-song delivery, the *hymn*, as

a preacher feels himself moved towards the cry of his sermon, and the complex, poetic form of the *canon*, in which some Welshmen can lapse with apparently little effort.

Into the context of the measured and scholarly discourse which Williams provides, the facts of both classical Pentecostalism, and the so-called neo-Pentecostalism of the Charismatic Renewal movement are not always easily accommodated. That his discussion shifts so markedly, from intricate and erudite scholarly concerns, particularly in his theological, but also in his psychological, discussion, to the populist, breezy, and at times almost bizarre material of Pentecostal history, indicates the breadth of the field he seeks to cover. Pentecostals in general are not, as Williams knows, much concerned with theological formulations, and they are, in both the sectarian and modern Charismatic branches, at least implicitly, and at times explicitly, disdainful of intellectualism. Yet, since, in his attempt to explain glossolalia, the author is committed, in my view quite properly, to taking into full account the interpretations of Pentecostals themselves, he cannot avoid being in some measure "infected" by their style of discourse and even by the banality and naivety by which their commentaries are sometimes marred. Despite the earnestness, Pentecostalism is a somewhat "swinging" mode of religion, and those who would understand it have to learn to swing a bit too. Thus it is that processes of diffusion of Pentecostal practice are described, in Pentecostal terms, for example, of fire and sparks.

Such questions as the will of the speaker, the extent to which the Spirit can be controlled, and whether glossolalia issues from a dissociated or trance condition, are all taken up. I think perhaps too much is claimed for the effects on the personality and their implications of the glossolalia, speaking in tongues, much of what is said for Pentecostals could be said for other sectarians, from Witnesses to Moonies.

These appear to be important currents in contemporary religion and one might expect a theologian to examine their implications, particularly when he has provided such a thorough treatment of psychological issues which presumably lie a little further from home.

They do become more considerate, more loving, and often more assured, as a result of their religious experience, and this result is probably not dependent explicitly on the exercise of glossolalia in the Pentecostal sense. As to the functions of the experience of an altered state of consciousness, such as occurs when speaking in tongues, Williams provides a valuable overview of the literature with its very divergent appraisals of the extent to which glossolalia betokens mental illness or neurosis, and the need for therapy, or is insignificant as an indicator of any type of abnormality. He is himself clearly happier with an indication of theological rather than of social psychological functions.

Paradoxically, this hasically theological book devotes neither more attention to social scientific commentary than to some theological issues that might have been worthy of discussion. Perhaps too little is said of the relation between Pentecostalism and second adventism. The belief in the advent was, I believe, often a genuine stimulus to the excitement of Pentecostal meetings, and speaking in tongues was widely seen as the promised "latter rain". Nor does Williams pursue a possible line of enquiry with respect to the theological implications of the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit for the organization of Christian religion. Pentecostalism implies the direct access of the Holy Spirit to men, and thus the possibly limited usefulness of intermediaries, hierarchies, and structures. It is an immediate experience, and it shuns much of the contemporary demand for instantaneity, for freedom from intellectualism, and for emotional and ecstatic experience, which is held to be more authentic than reason and intellect.

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The coming of the nomads

By John Forrester

GILLES DELEUZE and FELIX GUATTARI:
Mille Plateaux
645pp. Paris: Minuit.

Mille Plateaux is a rare and remarkable book, which offers us a new metaphysics. It is not just one more attempt to shift subject and substance, or essence and existence, around till they fit together snugly; rather, it sweeps all such old terms away. Much of the book's shock value arises from its deployment of unfamiliar models of thought, from its repudiation of our venerated signposts and its neglect of the images of the age. Why not take the rhizome rather than the tree, it asks, as our vegetal model of process, or of history? Cast aside the signifier, along with the "tree" model of logic, biology, and decision theory and take up their new ontology, which includes such bizarre items as the rhizome and the "abstract machine". It is not fanciful to argue that our feelings of intellectual territoriality, of being at home in our thought, are tied to the facility with which we employ our habitual models; no such familiarity will aid the reader of *Mille plateaux*. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari succeed in depriving us of the advantage of playing at home. Indeed, they would have us believe that only away games count.

The authors appear to be at home in a remarkable number of disciplines: political theory, psychoanalysis, anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, musical theory, literary criticism, mathematics. They fight out familiar and not so familiar battles within each area, and bind these local conflicts into an overarching metaphysics whose terms may be borrowed from Castaneda or Riemann, from Klee or Geoffrey St. Hilaire. (It is not often one finds

Frank Herbert and Julia Kristeva cited in the same footnote, to support the same argument.) This eccentricity of citation, which is shared by other authors, such as Jacques Derrida or Walter Benjamin, here gets its rationale from the theory of nomadism. In opposition to the imperial principle - of logos, of proud order and rational conquest, the principle of "great works" - they offer the free-wheeling, de-territorializing activity of the nomad. It has always been difficult for the judicious historians to restrain their distaste for the sporadic forces of destruction embodied in the nomads' overturning of state-organized civilization. The authors ask us to reconsider our world history with a cooler, less ideologically anxious gaze. They juxtapose the State with nomadism, arguing that the former is the defining principle of ancient and feudal, as well as "modern", societies. On the one hand, the ordered, striated space of agricultural and industrial economies; on the other hand, the nomads, who inhabit a "smooth space" (*espace lisse*), with no fixed points of reference, in which they move without ever "arriving". The authors do not deny the cruelty of the rampaging nomad, but they point in turn to the cruelty of pacifying systems of states, which employ their military might to impose order and justice on the nomads. It is the prerogative of the modern State to have found two further principles of organization: it renders populations into tools (*asservissement*) and transforms them into subjects (*assujettissement*). The division of "inner" from "outer", which plays so big a role in the way the State determines its territory, also makes possible the systematic repression of certain social strata within its confines. It may be true that the nomads have lost their running battle with civilization, but Deleuze and Guattari attempt to demonstrate how the permanent possibility of nomadic insurgency inhabits the minority - eg, the well-regulated schizophrenics who

populate our mental hospitals - because only the minorities have a future, a becoming (*un devenir*).

Take Freud's "little Hans". He is confronted by the psychoanalyst, who embodies the despotic dead dog father, the Caesar, and who has refined the principles of interpretation by which the priests of State religious conquest (Saint Paul) snare the territory of the spirit. The little "boy", in "reality" a horse in a state of becoming (*un devenir-cheval*), desired to follow the "line of flight" that would lead him out of the over-coded space of his home into the street. Instead, he found himself re-coded by Freud back into the space of the holy family: first, by a sign-symbol (his phobia), secondly, by psychoanalysis's interpretative codes (his latent desire to kill the father). He is safely reterritorialized back in the house, with mummy and daddy, his nomadic inclinations having been ossified, State-sized.

At first glance, the references to territory scattered throughout the book seem to have been taken from animal ethology, from Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen, but as one progresses from plateau to plateau, the nature of this space becomes more complex: it becomes the means of describing the organization of everyday life in cities; a space derived from topology; or an effect of relations between strata (a geological register). Nomads live in a "smooth space", subdivided between the fields and the forests - on the plateau from which the book gets its title. And just as nomads refuse the shelter and support of trees, and disrupt the geometry of sedentary cultures, so do Deleuze and Guattari themselves do the normal geometry of books. *Mille plateaux* is a work of movement, of shifting levels; above all, it has no stable point of reference.

Like their intellectual confrères, Michel Foucault, the authors see no escape from power relations: to suffer or oppose whatever is outrageous is to

find yourself, against your will, still in collusion with it. One will not open the "smooth space" (*u-topia*) by mastering the proletariat to police the activities of the State. But Deleuze and Guattari have something more positive to offer than Foucault. The latter's earlier works proclaimed the slench of man; his subsequent ones have gone on to analyse the power relations which produced the mirror of sovereign subjectivity, with its humanistic discourse of reform and education. Deleuze and Guattari take this critique of humanism one step further by espousing the two historical principles that have always most horrified civilized man: the "war machine" and nomadism. With their metaphysics of the "war-machines", the authors restore military history, with its sibling disciplines, the history of technology and of administration, to a pride of place from which Marxist economic and social histories had banished it.

Yet this is a book of abstract metaphysics, as well as being an analysis of the logic of the Cold War and of the beginnings of civilization. Its characteristic set of models is drawn from various fields: technology (weaving vs pottery); music (Pierre Boulez's analysis of space, time and rhythm); the sea (not only the original "smooth" space, but also the element to be conquered by the State sciences of astronomy and cartography); mathematics (a theory of multiplicities employing the notion that Riemannian space is a patchwork, thus defining a "smooth" space as possessing the same order of dimensionality as those elements that make it); physics (the whirlpool vs Euclidean lines of gravity); aesthetics (nomadic and abstract art). These models are themselves sewn together, to form a patchwork, as a consequence of which the mathematical model can be applied to literature, while the ruling polarity of the book,

would be nomads: do not read *Mille plateaux* straight through. This is a book to be traversed according to taste and inclination - according to one's own "lines of flight". I recommend the section "Sur quelques régimes de signes" for its bnsk and profound between the lines, and the hundred-page "Traité de Nomadologie - Machine de Guerre". But despite my irritation, and my withholding of full assent from this work takes up the challenge of the Great Refusal that has characterized so many of the most lasting and evocative cultural analyses of the recent past (one thinks particularly of Adorno). However, in contrast to Adorno and Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari do not lead us, plateau by plateau, towards a stoical pessimism.

Managing the manager

By Harold Hobson

Julie Hollidge:
Innocent Flowers
Women in the Edwardian Theatre
218pp. Virago, 1979.
£10.95, 1979.

Julie Hollidge declares that she likes challenging statements, and she begins her entertaining and instructive book with appropriate belligerence: "The actress's position in any society that is dominated by men is an ambiguous one. She is successful in so far as she can recreate male images of women. Yet she may be regarded as a knock-off of a male role, a female version of a male role, a female version of a male role." Her book is capable of a very different interpretation from that which she herself puts upon it. For it may be argued that the theatre of the early years of the century, despite the proliferation of actor-managers, was in reality dominated, not by men, but by women.

None of the actresses in *Innocent Flowers* in the slightest degree resembles male fantasies of women as unbusinesslike, fragile creatures dependent on the guidance and authority of men. There are no Dora Spenshaws or Amelia Sedgelys here. People like Athene Seyler, Lena Ashwell, Elizabeth Robins and Irene Vanbrugh were not on the stage in order to be pushed around by male superiors. Miss Hollidge shows, perhaps without realizing it, that actresses by no means behaved as though they were in a society dominated by men, even when

the men were actually in a position of superiority and power. Irene Vanbrugh, when she had had only one part in a London production, went to the Haymarket Theatre, presented her visiting card - "a very common little card", she said - and demanded to see Herbert Tree. Very few men would have dared to do that. Not only did Tree see her, but when she demanded a part in one of his productions, he gave it to her, after feebly protesting that she was already bound to another manager who was one of his friends. And when Miss Vanbrugh demanded that she be paid more, he agreed to increase her salary to be increased, the great man meekly agreed.

Irene Vanbrugh does not appear to have been exceptional. Athene Seyler was equally determined to stand on her own feet. When she applied for admission to the (not-then-Royal) Academy of Dramatic Art, Hancock took one look at her, and said that he was sorry, but she had no qualification for the stage. Miss Seyler was not in the least disconcerted. "I know what you mean," she replied. "I'm very plain but I'm sure if you heard me recite, you'd change your mind." He did change his mind, and she became the Academy's third Gold Medalist.

The opposition that women who wanted to go on the stage had to surmount came not from the men who were already there, but from their parents. This Miss Hollidge shows vividly enough. Athene Seyler herself had to struggle for a year with her father and go into a decline before her family and mother would agree to her choice of profession. The theatre was long a disreputable profession. In 1889 the Association for the Employment of

Women was set up, and disseminated its views in a magazine called *The Englishwoman's Journal*, which argued that women should be employed as hairdressers, hotel managers, wood engravers, dispensers, house decorators, watchmakers and telegraphists. But, says Miss Hollidge, it "showed little interest in the theatrical profession".

Yet the theatre was one of the very few professions that gave to women great privileges and opportunities. Successful actresses were an especially favoured section of the community, and were freely allowed indulgences that would have roused a Prime Minister. The husbands of actresses who had married did not appear to have expected them to carry out the conventional duties of wives. Ellen Terry had three husbands (the last of whom was four years younger than her son), but neither of her children was by any of her husbands.

Why did actresses have such a splendid time? Miss Hollidge thinks that it is because they submitted themselves to the wishes and fantasies of men. But in her instructive and readable book, she undercuts the audience. Forty years ago, Somerset Maugham said that drama critics were useless because they tried to avoid being influenced by the emotions of the audience. But, Maugham insisted, the emotion of the audience is a vital part of the theatrical experience. Now in the first part of the century the majority of most audiences were women.

Terence Rattigan instinctively called his actresses Aunt Edna, not Uncle Edwards. This classification was never challenged. Henry James wrote: "There is almost always an old lady taking seats for the play . . . The

number of old ladies one has to squeeze past in the stalls is very striking." It was the audience that dominated the society in which women in the theatre had to work. These audiences were, mostly, conventional enough in their private lives. But the probability is that in the lives of actresses they vicariously fulfilled desires which they would not ordinarily have admitted. It was women rather than men who fell in love with the trim, neat and saucy figure of Vestal Lily. That there might be a touch of lesbianism in this Miss Hollidge does not very emphatically deny. Indeed there is a note of lesbianism running through much of her book, and it comes out very loudly in her long study of the Pioneer Players, and Edith Craig, Christopher St John and Clare Atwood.

For all their power and independence, though, actresses had to work in theatres dominated by male actor-managers; and it was natural at a time of feminist activity in other areas that they should have pressed for the establishment of organizations which would put on plays of their own choosing. The first public meeting was held at the Criterion Restaurant in

1908. 400 actresses listened to telegrams of support from Madame Sarah Grand, Arthur Wing Pinero, J. K. Jerome and Henry Neville. "The meeting began at three o'clock, but despite the large number of women present and the exclusively female membership of the League, the chair, says Miss Hollidge disapprovingly, "was taken by the actor-manager, Mr Forbes-Robertson". She tells the League's story with great verve. It makes heady reading to learn of the struggle between the moderates and the militants, and of the opposition to the extension of the franchise of Beatrice Webb. Mrs Webb apparently believed that the emancipation of women had gone far enough, given the physical limitations of their bodies, but in the end her opposition did not matter. The vote for women over thirty came as a result of the war, and many of those who fought for the vote found the achievement an anti-climax. Cicely Hamilton, the dramatist and actress, wrote: "Truth to tell, at that moment I didn't care a button for my vote. I have always imagined that the Government gave it to me in much the same mood as I received it".

Backstage effort

By Julie Hankey

JIM HILEY:

Theatre at work
The story of the National Theatre's production of Brecht's *Galileo*
230pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
£9.75, 0 7100 1815 5

After Ken Tynan's book on another John Dexter production - *Othello, the National Theatre production* - one comes to this account of the National's *Galileo* with false expectations. What Jim Hiley's book is not is a close account, scene by scene, speech by speech, of how Dexter and Gammon arrived at a given interpretation. Perhaps the very nature of the play precludes it. What Hiley does intend is to reconstruct the whole paraphernalia of a production. That of course includes the acting, but with the emphasis distributed evenly between the production's design and management, and the play itself.

The whole process lasted five and a half months, and during it Hiley was given licence to record everything from the great steel-assembling operations of the set-builders to the embarrassing private dressings-down by Dexter of individual actors. Because of their involvement in other shows, the actors themselves were a late arrival, joining the enterprise for about the last third of it.

With costing forecasts to consider, the National's administration pressed the designer, Jocelyn Herbert, to present the finished design early. "Actors had therefore been moving in miniature for months round a model of the Olivier before a live actor stepped onto the stage. There could be none of the luxury that Brecht and his designer Caspar Neher knew, of developing ideas round the working actors.

The most intransigent problems were caused by the Olivier himself, the theatre chosen partly for its prestige among the three at the National, and partly because its open stage accords, on the face of it, with Brecht's ideas. (In fact the Lyttelton's proscenium theatre is closer to the theatre Brecht had to use and to keep in mind while writing.) As it was, Jocelyn Herbert's task was to define the space, to make boundaries and edges which, without losing the openness, would give some framework to the actors. And ironically, in spite of the architectural intentions of the Olivier stage, she had to overcome its tendency to distance the audience - which she did by building the playing area up and out. The shaping of her ideas in collaboration with Dexter, how they were realized in the workshop and transferred to the stage so that nothing jammed, cracked, or collapsed is a story which makes almost more absorbing reading than the chapters about the rehearsals.

As an actor himself, Hiley has a nose for backstage dramas. The people who executed Herbert's sketches were so beset by misunderstandings and uncertainties of responsibility that he has plenty of scope here. With three days to go before the first preview, for example, major alterations had to be made to the substructure of the raised stage: "Minton further defined, and Taylor denied, that the whole installation had been carried out three or four inches out of position under Taylor's command . . . whoever was responsible, the floor boards would have to come up again. . . . One of [the crew] protested: 'Why didn't we do this fucking yesterday?' What might be dismissed as mere gossip did in fact tell us something about the pressures people worked under.

The exasperation, Hiley is quick to point out, was always an expression of perfectionism, and wherever he went he uncovered extraordinary scenes of diligence: the false nose department specially designing a nose for the baldhead that would allow his own to vibrate during his song; the man who spent three weeks on versions of the Pope's crown, decorating it at last with mouldings taken from keyhole coverings; the people who twice removed and reapplied leaf pressings on a candelabrum which they, correctly, never believed would be used. In retrospect a production as a whole is as peculiar and self-contained as the performers themselves. And in noting these things the book gets in on the birth of theatrical nostalgia.

Dexter, in keeping with the technical absorption round him, rehearsed his actors with an ear for clarity and pace rather than psychological depth. It is not Michael Gambon and his gradually developing Galileo who figures largely in the rehearsals, but the dozens of small-part players who were drilled into expressiveness with pleas to "bite on the text" and "clatter your teeth round the words". Nor, we learn, did the dish out "wedges" of theory. The Marxist versus humanist controversy over whether to include the last scene, which exercised him, the translator Howard Brenton, and Jocelyn Herbert, was finally settled on the theatrical grounds. It stayed, not because Dexter wanted to avoid ending on a personal note, but because he thought the scene worked. He rehearsed ruthlessly, treating his actors like a writer his works; ransacking them for their possibilities, and if necessary scrapping them altogether. Actors were sometimes disarrayed, not so much by the rigours of working with him, as by the camp wasspishness which has, apparently, made him notorious.

Nevertheless it says something for the book that with all its raw material for backstage gossip, what sticks in the mind is the multifariously corporate (if not entirely cooperative) effort, and its hundred or so photographs by Zoë Dominic emphasize that rather than the personalities.

Keeping it theoretical

By Peter Carey

R. S. NEALE

Class in English History 1680-1850
250pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £12.
0 631 12851 4

This book has been prompted by R. S. Neale's concern for what he describes as "the parlous state" of social history today. Despite a great variety of social history, there are, in Professor Neale's opinion, very few social historians and those few suffer from a continuing uncertainty about the nature and status of their subject.

Although Neale agrees with E. J. Hobsbawm that social history is essentially the Marxist materialist conception of history, he stresses that there is a paramount need for historians to be clear in their own minds about the ideas of class and class consciousness embodied in that conception. This is all the more urgent, in Neale's view, for even non-Marxist historians, consciously or not, have been influenced by Marxist materialism, and there is a great need at present to define the

relationship between theory and history. Without this definition, Neale fears that social historians will be content to follow their own private pursuits and a true discipline of social history will never emerge.

In order to guard against this, Neale argues that social historians should recognize that the core of their discipline is akin to the sociology of knowledge, and that social history must define itself by its procedures. In fact, he suggests that social history should have three procedural strands each of which can draw upon recent work in social history. First, it must be specifically theoretical. Neale's preference here is for a Marxist theory. Second, social history must focus on social structure and the changes which take place within that social structure, particularly the family group. Here Neale advocates a cross-cultural approach including a comparison with non-western societies. At the same time he argues that social history should draw attention to the paramount importance of the expanding urban environments in which the individual and the family have made their homes, and the social groups to which those individuals belong. In Neale's view, both of these sets of structures must be observed within

specific and changing economic modes of production.

Third, social history should be as far as possible a "holistic" science encompassing a study of the ideas, knowledge and culture of communities and dealing with human perception as expressed in the highest branches of thought as well as everyday attitudes and acts. The most challenging and difficult task for the social historian, according to Neale, is to delineate objectively the inter-connections between these procedural strands, particularly between social structure and class and thought. Hence the importance, in his view, of theory.

In the light of all this, *Class in English History 1680-1850* examines some of the claims made by social historians, in particular when they use the concepts of class and class consciousness in their attempts to explain the history of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The starting point for this essay is Neale's discussion of Marx's views about class and class consciousness, which sets the tone by the rest of the book. Although the main area of his discussion is essentially theoretical and methodological, Neale has ranged very widely over questions of history and historiography, and has

incorporated many of his own recent researches, especially on the relationship between art and ideas, the social ideas of the "Rationalist Sociologists", the relationship between women and class consciousness, and the social history of Bath in the period covered. His purpose is not just to add another description or narrative of class formation, which he has already done in *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century* (1972), where he advanced his own much debated Five-Class Model of society, but to conduct a dialogue with students of history and social theory. He licenses this on the ways they have used or are still using concepts of class and class consciousness as a central organizing theme in their accounts of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century English society.

Like the series of lectures and seminar papers from which this book originally sprang, Neale's work is explicitly intended to be argued over and to start a debate which will help to define procedures in social history and delineate more clearly the nature of the social historian's task. Essentially, he is appealing to all those who share his disquiet about the prevalent belief in solutions in history can always be found in more of the "facts", in ever

more detailed descriptions of isolated or discrete events, and that empirical history can somehow function as its own court of appeal.

Although I myself cannot accept Neale's central contention that "history must become theoretical or else it will become irrelevant", I found his book, exceedingly stimulating and challenging, and one which at the very least is destined to provoke just the sort of debate which he hopes for. Particularly striking is his intriguing comparison of Harold Perkin's view of England in the eighteenth century as a classless society characterized by strong vertical patron-client relationships, with the more truly vertical social structure of Tokugawa Japan as described in Clive Nakane's *Japanese Society* (1973). It is clear that this and many other ideas, including Roland Hobsbawm's typology of social stratification which concentrates on classification by order rather than by classes, would benefit greatly from a similar comparison with work on non-western societies. R. S. Neale's book should be read not only by all students of modern English society, both Marxist and non-Marxist, but by all those interested in social history in general, both western and non-western.

Capturing the lion

By R. H. C. Davis

R. C. JOHNSTON (Editor and Translator):
Jarlan Fantasma's Chronicle
214pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £20.
0 19 815758 4

Jordan Fantasma's *Chronicle* is a poem of 2065 lines in Anglo-Norman French about the great revolt of 1173-4 against King Henry II. The poem's rebel was the King's eldest son, "the young king", and his revolt was dangerous because it was supported not only by many lords in England and in Normandy and Brittany, but also by the Kings of France and Scotland. Jordan Fantasma is concerned primarily with the Scottish campaign, which came to an abrupt end with the capture of the Scots King, William the Lion, at Alnwick, and with the campaign in East Anglia where Robert Earl of Leicester was defeated at Fornham St Genevieve.

The story is told in the manner of a *chanson de geste*, great dramatic effect being gained by the statement that William the Lion was captured on the very morning that King Henry II "made his peace" with St Thomas the Martyr at Canterbury. Henry did not hear the glad news till he had moved on to London. The poem tells us how he had gone to bed "and was propped up on his elbow, with a servant gently rubbing his feet", when the messenger arrived from Alnwick, having ridden "with nothing to drink or eat for three days" - his name was Brien and he was in the service of Rannulf Glanville. At first the chamberlain would not let him in, but eventually the king heard the noise he was making and ordered him to be admitted. At first he was stupefied by the news:

"Is the King of Scotland a prisoner? Tell me truly! 'Yes, sire, by my faith! Let me be nailed to a cross or strung up by a rope or burned in a fierce fire, if tomorrow ere midday everything be not confirmed!' Then says King Henry: 'Thanks be to God, and to St Thomas the Martyr, and to all the saints of God!'

The chronicle has survived in two manuscripts, one at Durham and the other at Lincoln, but it was first published in 1840 by a Frenchman, Francisque Michel, whose work has been the basis of subsequent editions by Howlett and Becker. The fact that has induced R. C. Johnston to do the work again is that these previous editions had not been able to make out how the verses were supposed to scan. The general opinion was that Jordan Fantasma was a poet who was too busy to be a story-teller, did not know much about poetry.

Now all that is changed. Taking up the work where the late Iain Mac-

donald had left it, Professor Johnston has solved the riddle of the prosody. In his edition the poem is divided into 217 lines (in length from four lines to fifty-nine), and every line is printed as two hemistichs, with a gap in the middle to indicate the caesura. This is not how the poem is set out in either manuscript, but Professor Johnston justifies his method by showing that, applied systematically throughout the poem, it becomes clear that Jordan Fantasma was a much experienced versifier, a "skilled craftsman", writing in five different metres and changing from one to the other with great dexterity. Professor Johnston's explanation is wholly convincing, even if it leaves one somewhat critical of the poet whose metres have baffled modern scholars for more than a century. Johnston states that he cannot see "how recital could make anybody aware of the complicated relationships" of the lines in the most complicated passages. But here, at any rate, the student will find the distribution of verse-forms set out in tabular form, while the footnotes (printed at the end) provide a detailed running commentary.

The poem must have been written before the death of the "young king" in 1183, but that does not mean that it is correct in all its details. Jordan claims to have seen the capture of William the Lion "with his own eyes", but just as a newspaper report can be immediately mistaken, so can the narrative even of an eye-witness who is determined to make his work a literary masterpiece. Marjorie Chibnall has commented recently on the speed of the growth of epic legend by pointing out how Orderic Vitalis, writing within four or five years of the Battle of Fraga (1134), has added a final scene which is "pure fiction" and almost transforms defeat into victory.

Who was Jordan Fantasma? The bishop of Winchester had a clerk called Master Jordanus Fantasma who claimed a monopoly of the schools at Winchester (where he had a house in Minster Street) and who was accused by another clerk of having caused the death of his father. Possibly also he was a pupil of Gilbert de la Porée, but no contemporary refers to him as a poet or chronicler. Johnston professes himself puzzled by his praise of Norfolk, but that surely should be connected with his interest in, and admiration for, Rannulf Glanville and his messenger Brien. Johnston also suggests that "Fantasma or Fantasma with the meaning 'illusion' . . . would be a good nickname for someone whose qualities were the opposite to those suggested by his name." Would it not have been even more suitable for someone who had seen things with his own eyes as if he had been an ever present ghost or phantom?

Managing the monastery

By Rosalind Hill

SALLY N. VAUGHN:
The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo-Norman State 1034-1136
168pp. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, £17.50.
0 85115 140 X

This scholarly and interesting book consists of a short essay on the secular lives of the Abbey of Bec during the lives of its first four abbots, to which are appended translations of early lives of the founding fathers of the monastery, Herluin, Lanfranc, Anselm (in the version by Ralph de Diceto, since an admirable translation of Eadmer's life has already been published by Sir Richard Southern), William de Beaumont and Boso. Sally Vaughn is content to leave the spiritual and intellectual history of Bec to others; she concentrates her researches firmly upon the feudal and political relationships of this remarkable monastery which, established between 1034 and 1037 with poor endowments and an almost Cistercian determination to renounce the world, became by the end of the century one of the main centres of monastic reform in Normandy and contributed two of our most famous archbishops to the see of Canterbury.

Except for the Duke of Normandy, Bec depended upon no local patron. Lanfranc and Anselm, respectively one of the leading canonists and one of the most profound theologians of the age, were drawn to Bec largely because of its unusually privileged position. Like Cluny it had succeeded in remaining exempt both from its local bishop and archbishop and from the potentially interfering patronage of local magnates. Where Cluny depended directly upon the pope, Bec, growing up in the older tradition of co-operation between saintly founder and secular ruler, relied upon the protection of the Duke of Normandy, although the abbot did not do homage to him. And, unlike Cluny, Bec never developed the overpowering round of splendid liturgical observances which took up so much time as to frighten away potentially learned recruits.

It was fortunate for Herluin's monastery that the period of its greatest fame coincided with the life of Duke William of Normandy. William was a genuinely devoted reformer, but he was also a good judge of men, and a ruler who was prepared to stand on his own feet. He seems to have been deeply impressed by both Lanfranc and Anselm not only as saintly monks but also as men thoroughly experienced and efficient in worldly affairs. He did

not hesitate to commit the kingdom of England, in his absence, to the regency of an archbishop whose practical experience had been gained in administering the immunities and estates of the Abbey of Bec where, in the days of Abbot Herluin's old age, most of the practical work of government had become the responsibility of Prior Lanfranc. Abbot Anselm's European reputation as a theologian and a teacher, so simply demonstrated in his own words, and in the biography written by his friend Eadmer, has made us see him as something of an unwelcome saint, driven to political action by the inexorable pressure of a moral principle. In reality, like many saints, he appears to have had a strong sense of responsibility for the legal rights of his abbey and a determination to keep those rights intact against the encroachments either of diocesan bishop or of neighbouring landlord.

Yet the reforms of Bec proved in the long run to be too successful for the

permanent reputation of the monastery itself. Lanfranc and Anselm established the traditions of Bec in the English church, but without the stimulus of their presence the school in Normandy faded into obscurity. Under the rule of Anselm's successors, William de Beaumont and Boso, it is clear that the influence of the abbey was waning and that its immunities were being slowly whittled away. The monks themselves seem to have realised that they were living in the twilight of a golden past, for it was in this period that they took care to write the biographies of their great men and to record for posterity the rights and liberties with which their house had been endowed.

Dr Vaughn has done valuable work in setting the reformers of Bec solidly against the pattern of feudal society and her book should find a place in the libraries of all serious students of the history of the Anglo-Norman church.

Falling tragically

By Claire Cross

NANCY LENZ HARVEY:
Thomas Cardinal Wolsey
238pp. Macmillan, £8.95.
0 02 548600 4

The publication in the past two decades of much revisionary work on early Tudor law, government and administration, the state of the church immediately before the Reformation, the impact of Renaissance humanism both on the universities and more vividly upon English culture and, not least, of an important biography of Henry VIII by J. J. Scarisbrick, has opened up the possibility of a major new scholarly reassessment of the career of Thomas Wolsey.

This is not the task, however, which Nancy Lenz Harvey has assigned herself, and it would be unfair to judge her *Thomas Cardinal Wolsey* by these standards. Deliberately setting her sights at a popular audience she has aimed at an imaginative recreation of the cardinal's public life. In *Elizabeth of York and The Rose and The Thorn* Mrs Harvey has already portrayed the mother and two sisters of Henry VIII; now she confronts the most overweening figure, the king apart, on the early Tudor scene. She approaches her history from a background in English literature and apprehends Wolsey's

biography in terms of the drama. His rise from humble beginnings in Ipswich, his immense power in church and state as the chief minister of Henry VIII virtually from the king's accession until the late 1530s, his ignominious fall on his failure to procure the dissolution of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, provide to the full all the elements of a classic tragedy.

Mrs Harvey divides her book into three parts entitled "World and Time Enough", "The Tides of Pomp" and "Injures of Wanton Time" and quotes liberally from the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* and contemporary accounts such as Cavenish's *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* at the most crucial moments in the action. Delighting to dwell upon Tudor pageantry, she reserves her main energies for descriptions of his failure to procure the dissolution of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, provide to the full all the elements of a classic tragedy.

While Mrs Harvey's exuberant American rhetoric may not be altogether to English taste, she has certainly brought back from her "prowl" through "the distant chambers of the sixteenth century" a vivid evocation of Wolsey's life for the general reader.